

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

SHA is now in a far better place than a year ago. We have rebuilt links with the Shadow Team and the unions. We are developing new policy areas. Branches continue to be active and are now linking up to share ideas and experiences. Financially, we are stronger than we were and we can see our position clearly and the direction of travel. We have about 10% more members than 6 months ago. I am particularly pleased that we have had such a good response to requests for support and assistance from members.

### **Shadow Team**

We continue to talk to the Shadow Team. We are currently in conversation with Jonathan Ashworth, Alex Norris, Liz Kendall and Vicky Foxcroft. We are planning a meeting of Sheffield residents organised by SHA Yorkshire with Ms Kendall which will enable her to learn about services from the users' point of view while at the same time becoming engaged with plans for a radical neighbourhood-centred approach to social care.

SHA was represented at a meeting with Ms Foxcroft on policy development for disabled people. A recent meeting with Alex Norris, Shadow Minister for Primary Care and Public Health enabled us to emphasise our stance on ICSs and to explore new directions for primary care and public health. We hope to have a meeting with Jonathan Ashcroft and Alex Norris on the ICS developments soon.

### **The Coop Bank**

The Officers now have access to the Coop Bank accounts. Martin is preparing a financial report and budget. Jean has access to the information but not to any expenditure facility. All spending will now come from the Coop account. Martin will soon set up an accounting package, recommended in the 2018 audit, that will make accounting and auditing easier. It is a relief to know that the right people are in charge.

### **Branch elections**

These are now in train. To prevent any repetition of the problems caused by the invalid elections last year, we have put in place election supervisors and more detailed advice that we hope will make it easy for branches to hold safe, transparent and fair elections. We are most grateful to Jane Roberts and Ian Reilly for their involvement and support. I pay tribute to Ken who works tirelessly to make this work well.

### **Meeting of branches and devolved nations.**

We held a supportive and practical meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November to improve life for branches. A number of practical changes were agreed which will enable us to support branches' work with each other and with the centre. A positive step forward.

### **Special General Meeting**

The holding of the SGM has been under consideration by a small group under the chair of Brian Gibbons. It has only now been possible to hold an SGM as we have not had an accurate membership list till now. The group is exploring how to hold an SGM safely during the pandemic, but also ensuring that the motion is constitutionally correct. The report will be sent to Central Council for consideration.

### **Race, Racism and Health policy development**

We have at last managed to bring an excellent group together. We have written a scoping paper which, if agreed by CC, will be worked on over the next few months. This is a vital part of our policy portfolio and I hope that CC will agree that it continue to the next phase.

### **Universal Basic Income and Modern Monetary Theory**

John Carlisle of SHA Yorkshire is spearheading this area of work, having held a meeting on this some months ago. We hope to have a national speaker at this meeting which will be widely publicized. I hope that we can use that as a basis for SHA policy development.

### **Website**

The website group has produced a report enclosed for this CC meeting. It is a realistic and practical proposal which I am informed is good value. If completed, it will result in a better, more flexible and attractive website. It will, however, require a lot of consistent work. I am delighted that we have had offers of support to help us through the next phase – if CC will agree to the funding.

### **Guest Blogs**

Thanks to all who contributed to a vigorous discussion on the guest, advertising blogs. Opinion is divided as to what is the best course of action. The Officers have developed policy that will enable us to reduce the number of blogs and their inappropriate nature with the intention of stopping them. In parallel, Martin will need to investigate alternative approaches to raising funding.

### **Social Care campaign**

This continues to build. We have expanded the group that will guide the network to include key organisations. We hope to provide resources and tools for SHA branches to do local campaigning on local social care issues, under the banner of the 7 demands. Motions to be used locally and a petition will be circulated. We hope that the New Year will see the full flowering and flourishing of the campaign.

### **Thinking the Future**

Healthcare is changing, our populations are changing, the political and cultural world is shifting. Covid has accelerated many elements. The basic building blocks of capitalism, however, are unchanged. Our government and others are using the pandemic to strengthen neo-liberal ideas and make the population pay.

What does a socialist healthcare and public health future look like?

The SHA is well-placed to explore this. It will require building on our strengths – particularly those parts of the SHA which want to continue our developments, our cross-sector experience, our management experience and our national and international links.

I hope to build a debate about the future over the next few months, engaging all our members and beyond.

### **Internal fights**

We remain dogged by the relentless barrage of legal letters and criticism. This is energy that could be better spent supporting the SHA in taking the fight forwards, rather than focusing on internal strife. I understand the anger but I hope you can see the importance and benefit of taking a clear stand for a rules-based and consistent SHA. We want this positive approach to continue and build, not be derailed by internal fighting.

**Brian December 20**