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**ANNUAL REPORT**

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

None of you will need convincing about how shattering this year has been for the NHS and for us all. The Covid pandemic struck a health and care system undermined by years of Tory cuts. And that on top of tens of thousands excess deaths as a result of austerity in the last 4 years. Is it any wonder that the government’s response was among the worst in the developed world - with outcomes to match?

The situation was only rescued by extraordinary efforts from NHS and care staff. Vaccines often developed and based on research in the UK are now beginning to bring the pandemic under control.

For the SHA this has been an exceptionally difficult year and I would like to thank all those who have done so much for our organisation.

We now have:

* New branches, with better links between branches,
* Improved relations with the Shadow Health Team,
* New areas of policy development - including work on Race, Racism and Health,
* Growing relations with Unions,
* Regularised and constitutional elections,
* A stable administration with improved governance and better finances.

But I cannot hide from you the fact that this has come against a difficult background. When the current leadership took over last year, the SHA was in a very poor state. The SHA constitution was not being adhered to, finances were in a mess and the previous leadership were unwilling to assist in the transition.

There were financial irregularities and unconstitutional branches - issues that had to be addressed. This has now been done. I am spelling out below the challenges that had to be faced. I trust that they are now firmly in the past and that the SHA can develop into the powerful, positive force that Labour and our people need.

**CONFRONTATION INTERNALLY**

We entered the year with the previous administration, led by Alex Scott-Samuel, having no contact with the Shadow Team, having alienated the unions who had disaffiliated, having missed an AGM and with weak finances.

**Unconstitutional branches**

Within a few weeks of me becoming Chair, Alex Scott-Samuel explained at a Central Council meeting that many branch officers had been elected unconstitutionally. The Officers conducted an investigation which confirmed that. They called a meeting of Central Council, inviting only those properly elected. We were shocked to receive legal threats, brought by Andrew Thompson, Vivian Walsh, Caroline Bedale and Tony Beddow, with written evidence from Alex Scott-Samuel. Despite threats, the meeting was properly called and held. No legal action was taken.

**Special General Meeting**

The understandable but inappropriate anger over the unconstitutional branches led many members to call for an SGM to remove the Chair and Secretary. The position was investigated by a subgroup of CC which explored the difficulties of the constitutional and practical problems as outlined by legal opinion. The SGM was never convened.

**Financial irregularities**

Financial irregularities in 2019 were described by the then Treasurer in the first half of the year. The Officers arranged an independent investigation which found a small number of transactions where the previous Chair, Alex Scott-Samuel, had claimed expenses and processed the reimbursement himself, executing his own payment through the banking system. There is no indication of impropriety but this was not good practice.

**Treasurer ceased to be a member**

After repeated warnings about unconstitutional behaviour and formal advice from solicitors, the previous Treasurer continued to refuse to work within the constitution.  She refused to allow the Officers onto the bank account and blocked the account, making it impossible to run the organisation. As a result, following her refusal of mediation, her membership ceased and CC elected Martin Brooks as Treasurer.  Legal threats were again made and responded to.  No legal action has been taken.

**Banking issues**

The signatories from the previous administration, Alex Scott-Samuel, Tony Beddow and Alison Scouller, were in breach of the constitution and the Standing Financial Instructions by repeatedly refusing to allow the Officers to become signatories. They eventually resigned as signatories in November 20 and the Officers now have access to our bank.

**Data breaches**

There have been a number of varied data breaches mainly through branches. These have put the SHA at risk of litigation. The Officers accordingly took precautions to ensure, on a temporary basis, that all branch communication went through the data controller, our Administrator, Ken Smith. In addition, we will put a data sharing agreement in place and are improving our GDPR policies and documentation.

**Undermining the SHA**

We held a successful meeting on Social Care at the Labour Party conference. John McDonnell was due to speak. Hours before the meeting began, I was informed that SHA representatives had asked him not to speak and he withdrew. This was a clear undermining of the Association.

**Electoral issues**

As you are aware, recently Mark Ladbrooke, Vivien Walsh and Tony Beddow, using SHA resources, organised a meeting at which they planned to introduce selected candidates to a selected audience. This breached both data rules and good electoral practice. The Officers were forced to insist that the meeting be cancelled – and I am pleased to report that it was.

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUCCESSES**

Despite these constant difficulties, the SHA has broken free and moved rapidly on.

**Valid branch elections**

We held valid branch elections with the help of independent supervisors for whose services we are most grateful. There was a huge influx of new members, particularly in London.

**Regularising the Admin function**

The previous administration, under Alex Scott-Samuel, had left our contractor Administrator exposed with a flimsy legal arrangement. He now has a standard contract and is supervised and appraised.

**Improved governance**

We have agreed Standing Financial Instructions, Standing Orders and a Register of Interests. These have made it fairer and easier to run the organisation. They were long overdue.

**Improved relations with the Shadow Health Team**

We now have a revived relationship with the Shadow Health Team, most of whom are now SHA members. At the beginning of the pandemic, we provided the Team with rapid briefings. In addition, we have engaged the Team in more detailed policy discussions on social care, primary care, public health.

We have provided grass roots feedback from our members and helped formulate killer questions for the Team.

**Improved relations with the Unions**

We are in contact with Unite, Unison and the GMB. Unite have restarted their affiliation to the SHA. All three unions and the TUC have become involved with our Campaign on Social Care. We are delighted that we now have a positive working relationship and solidarity with our comrades.

**New branches, better links between branches**

Two new branches have started this year – the East of England and South West England branches. We are delighted to welcome them and look forward to them contributing to the thinking and the doing of the Association.

In addition, we have championed improved links between branches which are now communicating better and learning from each others’ local campaigning experience.

Many branches have held vibrant, well-attended meetings, building on and exploring national and local issues.

**Policy Development**

We completed our Social Care policy development this year and it was agreed by CC. It has formed the basis of the Social Care Campaign, jointly pursued by SHA and KONP. We are delighted that CC has approved the scope of the Race, Racism and Health working group which will begin detailed work soon.

As mentioned above, we have developed thinking on public health, primary care as part of our work with the Shadow Team. These are not yet formal SHA policies.

**Finance**

Thanks to the diligent work of our Treasurer, Martin Brooks, and the welcome new influx of members, our finances are in better shape than for some years. That gives us freedom to do more and be more flexible.

**Socialist Society elections**

SHA is affiliated to the Labour Party and is one of many Socialist Societies which have a special relationship within the Party. They are represented on the NEC, for instance. We recently elected unopposed Jean Hardiman Smith and Katrina Murray as representatives on the SocSoc Executive. Jos Bell continues as our rep until the next SocSoc AGM which will be later this year.

**Website**

Our website has been in need of improvement for years. We began an analysis of requirements this year. CC agreed a budget for making the site more flexible, more accessible and developing an archive. The work is beginning now.

**Campaigning local and national**

Although policy development is our forte, we have been campaigning both locally and nationally through the year.

Nationally we have built a social care campaign, co-chairing with KONP. This has developed our 7 Demands and drawn in key organisations, including unions, Reclaiming Social Care, The Women’s Budget Group, the National Pensioners Convention and ROFA, a Disabled People’s Organisation. Building it has taken time, but we hope it will have an impact through this year.

Locally, there have been vigorous campaigns run by branches. Oxford has been prominent in BAME work. The West Midlands, Liverpool and Yorkshire have held vibrant meetings. Liverpool and Manchester have been working on hospital campaigns.

I pay tribute to my fellow Officers, Central Council, and our committed membership.

We look forward to further development of the SHA next year.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Communication has been expanded with the Labour Party and other organisations, while raising our profile on Facebook and Twitter.

The Secretary has been involved in sending out internal SHA comms and has helped take key decisions between Central Council meetings. This has included helping to organise branch elections.

The Secretary has assisted with discussions on the website and on GDPR issues.

The Secretary has organised our Central Council meetings. This year we have had more frequent but shorter CC meetings. We have also taken some votes between CC meetings by email. CCs were held on: 29/2, 23/5, 1/8, 30/9, 12/12, 13/2/21

**Twitter:**

Over the last week the secretary posted 67 tweets which have gathered 15,100 tweet impressions, 1823 profile visits, and 157 mentions.  We have 6009 followers.  15,100 tweet impressions is the total number of people who saw the tweets in 1 week.

**Facebook**:

In the last 28 days posts have reached 1763 people, and we have 2788 post engagements, with 25 new followers. We had a 450 engagement total in the last week.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

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| **Income** | **Amount** | **Notes** |
| Subscriptions | |  | | --- | | £35,279.44 | |  |
| Web income | £6422.39 |  |
| Affiliation fees | £2754.00 |  |
| Banking | £241.24 | DD refunds and Interest on Savings a/c plus unknown transfer |
| Donations | £253.00 |  |
| **Total** | **£44,950.07** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure** | **Amount** |  |
| Administrator | £12,127.32 | Invoiced at £1000 per month (includes £127.32 late payment for December 2019) |
| Affiliation fees | £1908.25 | Labour Party affiliations (National / regional Scottish & Welsh parties etc.) |
| Member’s expenses | £2028.30 | Member re-imbursements, including AGM /Central Council |
| Consultancy | £864.00 | Independent review of expenditure and financial processes |
| Office administration | £845.91 | Office costs, including MailChimp mailing system |
| Social media adverts | £190.73 | Facebook |
| Office equipment | £59.99 | Replacement printer |
| Postage / phone | £199.97 | Includes AGM ballot postage costs |
| Room hire | £546.00 | Central Council meetings |
| Subscription overpayments | £514.18 |  |
| Website | £756.28 | Includes website maintenance and spam filters |
| **Sub-total** | **£20,040.93** |  |
| Surplus | £24,909.14 | Carried forward to balances |
| **Total** | **£44,950.07** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Balances | 31.12.2019 | 31.12.2020 |  | Notes |
| Co-op Current Account | £5,615.97 | £28,053.31 | Data withheld May – Nov 2020 by previous treasurer | Full audit required post lockdown |
| Co-op Savings Account | £21,028.67 | £21,102.58 | Needs checking.. | No statements received 2020 |
| Paypal account | £95.00 | £2319.64  (£75) | Transferred £2,244.64 23:00 31/12/2020 but not credited by Co-op until **4/1/21** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total all sources** | £26,739.64 | £51,475.53 |  |  |
| Totals as per database |  | **£51,648.78** | **Discrepancy** | **£173.25** |