



# INSS

**International Network for  
the Study of Spirituality**

**Research ~ Education ~ Practice**

**Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers  
1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023**

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Company Registration Number: 7549446 (England and Wales)  
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# **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

## **Trustees, Directors and Officers for the period 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023**

### **Elected Members of the Executive Committee:**

Dr Adam Boughey – Resigned April 2022  
Dr Cheryl Hunt  
Dr Sophie MacKenzie  
Prof. Wilfred McSherry  
Dr Michael O’Sullivan  
Prof. Melanie Rogers  
Prof. Linda Ross  
Dr David Rousseau  
Dr Joan Walton  
Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr

For the purposes of the Companies Act 1985 the elected members of the Executive Committee are Directors of the Company. The Company Directors are also the Trustees of the Charity.

### **Co-opted Members of the Executive Committee**

Mrs Julie Billingham  
Mrs Helen McSherry

### **Executive Committee Appointments**

Chair:	Dr David Rousseau
Honorary Treasurer:	Mrs Helen McSherry
Company Secretary:	Dr David Rousseau
Membership Secretary:	Prof. Linda Ross
Journal Chief Editor:	Dr Cheryl Hunt
Book Reviews Editor:	Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr
Conference Chair:	Dr Michael O'Sullivan
Conference Co-chair:	Dr Joan Walton
Accountant:	Mrs Helen McSherry
Links Co-ordinator:	Dr Michael O'Sullivan
Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator:	Prof. Wilfred McSherry
Social Media Co-ordinator:	Dr Sophie MacKenzie
Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIGs Co-ordinator:	Prof Melanie Rogers
Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology	Mrs Julie Billingham
Digital Infrastructure Manager	Dr Adam Boughey (resigned 4/22)
Acting Digital Infrastructure Manager	Mrs Julie Billingham (from 4/22)

# **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

The Trustees and Officers present their report on the activities of INSS for the year ending 31 January 2023.

## **Report of the Chair**

***Dr David Rousseau***

In the year under review we continued to develop the ability of INSS to serve and interconnect our international membership, and to promote the academic study of spirituality in all its facets.

It was in many respects a period of transition, with many ups and downs. However, overall we ended the year on a very positive note and with strong prospects for the future. I will briefly mention the main events here, but please refer to the individual Officer Reports for more detail.

### **Technical and operational support**

Adam Boughey resigned from his role as Digital Infrastructure Manager in April 2022, and we were not able to secure a replacement until early 2023. I'd like to thank Julie Billingham, our Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology, who stepped in and provided INSS with much needed technical and operational support during the 11 months we were seeking a replacement for Adam. In March 2023 we co-opted a new DI Manager, Armando Lüscher, and I'd like to use this opportunity to formally welcome Armando to our team.

### **Special Interest Groups**

Building on the successful launch of our first SIG in October 2021, on the topic of "Spirituality and Consciousness", we launched two more in 2022. The first one, on "Spirituality and the Arts" launched in March 2022 with Annalisa Burello, June Boyce-Tillman and Lila Moore as Chairs. Its establishment was a response to contemporary trends in the arts and academia that seek to integrate the relationship between the arts and spirituality. The second one, on "Spirituality, Mental Health and Wellbeing", launched in September 2022 with Katja Milner and Jill Buckeldee as Chairs. This SIG was set up in response to interest raised in relation to these topics by INSS members, including those who work as practitioners and researchers in this field. Please see the Officer reports below for more details on these developments. I would like to thank the Execs and the SIG chairs for their hard work in making these initiatives come to fruition.

### **Conference**

During 2022 the Execs invested a significant amount of time in the planning for the then upcoming next INSS conference to be held in Waterford, Ireland, during May 2023, on the theme of 'Spirituality, Critical Reflection, and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World'. This effort was ably led by Michael O'Sullivan as Conference Organiser and Joan Walton as Co-chair. The teamwork resulted in a conference that was fully subscribed and a great success socially,

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academically and financially. As the event actually occurred in the next reporting period, a full report will be given at the 2024 Annual Report. However some notes about the conference are contained in the reports of the Treasurer, Links Co-ordinator and Acting Digital Infrastructure Manager. Heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Michael, Joan and the team for making such a success of the first INSS conference to be held outside the UK.

### **Journal Editorship**

Cheryl Hunt, our Journal's Chief Editor, indicated in her previous report her wish to pass her role to Profs Wilf McSherry and Linda Ross in early 2023. They worked together in 2022 to ensure a smooth transition, and with our publisher, Taylor & Francis, to enable us to use their online submission and review management system, which should make it practical for a team of two Co-Chief Editors to manage the editorial workflow. Wilf and Linda formally took on their roles of Co-Chief Editors on 17 May 2023 during the Waterford conference.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Cheryl for shepherding the Journal so patiently and competently through to volume 13, and for her willingness to continue on as an Executive Editor. Congratulations are due also for her success in achieving a Journal Impact Factor for 2022 of 1.4, whereas the average for arts and humanities journals was 0.3 in 2022!

### **Publishing contract**

In December 2019 we notified our publisher, Taylor & Francis, of our wish to re-negotiate the terms of our existing publishing contract, which had been in place since 2013 and was due to come to the end of its natural term in December 2020. Under the then existing contract INSS and T&F own the journal jointly, INSS provides the journal content, and T&F manages journal production and distribution, administers our membership subscriptions and renewals, and TF pays INSS a fixed annual amount for JSS expenses. This amount has been static for the last 7 years. Our reason for wishing to renegotiate the terms was partly because we wanted to take over the management of our member subscriptions and renewals, and partly because we wished to improve the financial terms of our relationship. This turned into a protracted negotiating process, led by myself but with very substantial support and guidance from Cheryl Hunt and an advisor, Prof. Roderick Hunt.

This re-negotiation process proceeded throughout 2022; I'm happy to report that it was finally concluded in October 2023, and that we are very pleased with the outcome. Under the new arrangements INSS now has full ownership of the journal title, and will receive royalties at 12.5% on T&F's non-subscription income. This will increase to higher levels as T&F's income from our Journal passes certain limits. At present income levels, the royalty we receive will already be triple the amount we previously received annually for JSS expenses.

### **Officer roles**

2022 and 2023 has been challenging for the Execs in terms of the effort demanded, and in the light of this we have commenced a process to review and document the responsibilities of the different Officer roles, with a view to distribute better the workload, strengthen our

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procedures and resilience, and to help us plan an expansion of the Execs team. This is still ongoing, but we hope to bring these expansion plans into action in early 2024.

### **Funds**

In April 2022 INSS received an unsolicited grant of £35,000 from the GS Gives Annual Giving Fund, an account within Goldman Sachs Gives (UK). This was provided to support our general charitable activities, provides a very welcome boost to our financial situation, and will open up valuable opportunities for advancing our mission. This is to be supplemented by income of £8,375 from the 2023 conference, most of which was received in 2022 and so is included in the bank balance shown in the Balance sheet, but will only be properly reconciled in the accounts for the next period. On the basis of this positive financial position, we hope to be able to announce soon plans for expanding our services and outreach activities, especially in the area of educational resources about the study of spirituality.

### **Change of Chair**

Lastly, I would like to mention that due to changes in my personal circumstances I stood down as Chair at the end of January 2023, after three years in this role.

I would like to thank everyone on the Execs for what we achieved together in this time. It has been an interesting time that has seen many changes, including changing our name and Articles; rebuilding our website including a members-only area incorporating online access to the archive of our Journal; taking charge of our membership management via a new online membership database and membership management system; incorporating event management and payment processing facilities into our website; staging our first on-line conference and enabling our first international one; launching three SIGS; and securing a new publishing contract on very favourable terms. I am pleased that we have come so far in only three years, and I look forward to what can now be built on this foundation. The Execs elected Dr Joan Walton as our new Chair, and I wish her, and the team under her guidance, every success for the future.

It has been my great honour to serve as Chair, and I hope to continue to be useful to INSS in the future, albeit in less demanding roles. Despite my challenging personal circumstances I remain willing to continue in my role as Company Secretary.

## **Report of the Honorary Treasurer**

***Mrs Helen McSherry***

This has been a good year for our finances. A couple of large donations totalling £35,000 have increased our bank balance and sustains INSS's good financial position. Membership fees of £8,319 of which £3,060 was paid to Taylor and Francis for the publishing of the Journal gave us an income of 5,259, an increase on last year. Proceeds from the Special Interest Group meeting registration fees have also added to our income.

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We had two other main costs this year. Our PayPal facility incurred £812 and expenses relating to the administration of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality by INSS Executive Editors was £930. Our general administrative expenses were around the same at £751 giving us a net income in total of £37,560 for the year.

Our bank balance at the end of the financial year (31 January 2023) was £82,948 however this does include expenses of £443 along with £21,126 of registration fees relevant to the 2023 Conference held in May 2023.

### **Report of the Membership Secretary**

***Prof. Linda Ross***

At the end of the year (31st January 2023) there were 224 members, made up of 179 standard members and 45 honorary members (those on INSS Executive and/or the Editorial Board for the 'Journal for the Study of Spirituality'). This compares with a total of 173 members on 31st January 2022, an increase of 44. We are delighted to see the year-on-year increase in membership from across the globe: UK, Europe, North America, Australasia, Asia Pacific, South Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

### **Report of the Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology**

***Mrs Julie Billingham***

In this period, we continued to improve our digital tools to enable the Exec team more easily to manage their portfolios. My role in this is to advise on the tools that are available and to set them up in such a way that the operating teams can use them effectively with minimal support from the Digital Infrastructure Manager.

A major focus has been to enable the smooth running of our Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Over the current reporting year, I configured our membership platform to simplify the running of the Spirituality and the Arts SIG (SASIG), while bearing in mind the other SIGs in plan for later on. We revised the website navigation to allow for a new menu item for the SIGs, and created a default structure for SIG pages that includes widgets that automatically display any upcoming SIG events. The SASIG particularly wanted non-members to be able to attend events, so I set up the capability to take payment via the website when registering for a SIG event. Once an event is entered into the system, email invitations, confirmations and reminders are automatically sent to INSS members. At the request of the Chairs, I added the capability for members to be able to write something about their background and their interest in a particular SIG, so that these could be automatically shared (with permission) in a private members-only SIG space.

On another front, this year saw planning start for the 2023 conference in Waterford. To this end I developed a budgeting and forecasting spreadsheet that enabled us to set appropriate

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pricing and attendance targets for the conference. This spreadsheet tool should be easily reusable for future conferences.

### **Report of the Acting Digital Infrastructure Manager**

***Mrs Julie Billingham***

Early in this reporting period, our then Digital Infrastructure Manager, Adam Boughey, stepped down from the Committee. Since a number of infrastructure projects were ready to be handed over to the operational team, I took on his role on an interim basis while we searched for a replacement.

A key aspect of this role was to train one of the SASIG Chairs, Annalisa Burello, in how to use the new capabilities to manage the SIG on an ongoing basis. Encouragingly, she picked up the processes easily, even though the technology was new to her, and became quite independent over the course of the year.

The next major test of the new system came with setting up the Waterford conference as an event within the digital platform. This enabled attendees to register online, selecting various types of registrations and optional extras, and paying online via the website. As before, each new use highlighted constraints in the technology that had to be worked around, but in general the system proved robust. The reporting features of the platform were particularly helpful for tracking registrations and planning.

Throughout the year I supported the Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Conference organisers and others in dealing with any member issues that required a technical resolution. One such was the interface that allows members to get free online access to the JSS, provided they click through to the JSS from the members area. Updates from Google and Microsoft had broken this link, so we needed to collaborate with Taylor & Francis to explore alternatives and keep the link working.

Finally, just after the end of this reporting period, we were joined by a new Digital Infrastructure Manager, Armando Lüscher. I'm delighted to welcome Armando to the role and wish him every success in the future.

### **Report of the Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIGs Co-ordinator**

***Prof. Melanie Rogers***

The Spirituality Scholars' Network (SSN) is led by Melanie Rogers, Sophie MacKenzie, Cheryl Hunt and Alex Pimor. The SSN team meet every 2 months to discuss Special Interest Groups, The Conversational and other ideas as to how to engage INSS membership. The SSN aims to support postgraduates, early career researchers and scholars in sharing their interests,

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experiences, and projects in the field of spirituality studies. Sophie continues to post regularly on social media and we are starting to build up our following there.

In the year under review, the SSN has met in person at the INSS conference in Waterford and several SSN members are now working together on collaborative research projects. Three Special Interest Groups (SIG) are active with INSS. (One closed SIG focused on “Spirituality and Consciousness”, an open group focusing on “Spirituality and the Arts” and an open group focusing on “Spirituality, Mental Health and Wellbeing”. The Conversational initiative continues to develop.

### The Conversational:

In 2023, The Conversational series offered 2 sessions: *Inner Conscious Leadership* (facilitated by Alex Pimor) in March 2023 and *The origins and psychology of biblical mysticism* in June 2023 (presented by Les Lancaster). A third session is scheduled for November 2023, with Noel Keating, on *Children's spirituality and the benefit of meditation on a whole-school basis*.

Each session was attended by a growing number of interested parties, who engaged in dynamic conversations.

The experiential format of the Conversational evolves with each session, as speakers lead in the way that suits them and their subject-matter. Nevertheless, the session usually lasts an hour (with the possibility to extend for a further 30 mins depending on interest and time permitted). About 20-30% of the initial session is for introductions and presentation, the remainder of the time is for conversations or workshop style interactions.

The Conversational has received great feedback and it is anticipated that the series will continue in 2024.

### Report from the Chair of the Spirituality and Consciousness SIG: Joan Walton

The Spirituality and Consciousness SIG had its first meeting in October 2021 and has since then been meeting monthly. It is a closed group, with currently 7 members. The aim is to create a safe space where members can exchange ideas about consciousness and spirituality, the nature of the relationship between each, and to share experiences which inform those ideas. As time has progressed, the dialogue has gone deeper and more profound. We are now sharing what we have each gained from our participation in the group. Using the considerable amount of data we have gathered during our time together through our written experiences, reflections and theorising, we are planning to produce an account of the learning that has evolved from the group process during the last two years.



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Report of from the Chairs of the Spirituality and the Arts SIG: Annalisa Burello, Lila Moore and June Boyce Tillman

During 2023, we have developed two meeting formats: 1. A meeting led by a speaker and a particular topic. 2. Provocation: A meeting for general open discussions in which participants share their reflections on various aspects of the arts as spirituality. We have found that these meetings attract lively and in-depth interdisciplinary conversations. These two formats contribute to academic research and artistic and creative practice, allowing relevant themes to emerge spontaneously.

In 2023, we held four meetings led by speakers:

- A special talk with Prof. Louis Lagana: *Was Malta a Place for the Veneration of a Mother Goddess?* ;
- *Water as a Spiritual Signifier* by Water Artist Alison Churchill;
- Dr Karel James Bouse presented *Expressive Arts as Therapy*; and
- Annalisa Burello MSc presented *Marina Abramović, the Artist-Shaman*.

We already have a few speakers lined up for 2024.

The SASIG events provide a platform for artists, wellbeing practitioners and scholars to showcase their work and research projects, and to engage in a discourse that encourages the exploration of the arts in a broad spiritual context. At the heart of SASIG there is a quest that seeks to explore a variety of relationships between the arts and spirituality.

Report from the Chairs of the Spirituality, Mental health and Wellbeing (SMW) SIG: Katja Milner and Jill Buckeldee

The Spirituality, Mental health and Wellbeing SIG was set up in response to interest raised in relation to these topics by INSS members, including those who work as practitioners and researchers in this field. The first meeting took place on the 26th September 2022 and welcomed participants in a scoping exercise to gauge interest and explore ideas about future directions. Group members said that reflection and discussion was a helpful way to begin and further develop the SIG's directions. Further sessions were oriented around such group discussion, and in addition provided a focus around specific themes such as 'Hope' and 'Nurturing'. After further discussion, two key descriptions of the SIG were agreed upon:

The SMW SIG is focussed predominantly around exploring spirituality, mental health and wellbeing in the context of research, scholarship, healthcare and therapeutic practice.

It provides a co-created safe space which welcomes diversity, to reflect together and discuss pertinent themes and issues connected within this topic, as well as skill-share and inspire ideas and learning.

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An example of sharing expertise within the group was a presentation provided by a SIG member on 'Culture, diversity and spirituality' which focussed on navigating tensions between the spiritual model and medical model within social work practice. It was followed by a group discussion. The SIG aims to provide further opportunities for members to present on topics of interest and expertise in the future, as well as continue to highlight a collaborative approach and a safe space to reflect, share and learn together.

### **Report of the Social Media Co-ordinator**

***Dr Sophie MacKenzie***

#### **Twitter:**

The @INSSpirituality twitter account has grown steadily over the last year and now stands at 281 (up from 251 followers last report).

@JSSpirituality has 123 followers (up from 115 last report).

#### **Facebook:**

The INSS Spirituality Scholars' Network Facebook page now has 99 members (up from 82 last report).

Both Twitter and Facebook are used to promote INSS activities (such as the conference), as well as to disseminate other relevant information/ papers to our membership.

### **Report of the Links Co-ordinator**

***Dr Michael O'Sullivan***

Outreach to other academic organisations in the field of spirituality studies continued in 2022, seeking to establish links for mutual co-operations and promotion. So far INSS has established such relations with 22 organizations. The links page on the new INSS website can be viewed here: <https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/Links/> and also a page on guidelines for how we establish such links, here: <https://spiritualitystudiesnetwork.org/Guidelines-for-link-inclusion/>

The Links Coordinator accepted to be Chairperson and lead organiser of the 7th biennial INSS conference to be held in May 2023 on 'Spirituality, Critical Reflection, and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World'. As Emeritus at the new South East Technological University, Waterford Campus, Ireland, and the founding programme leader of the MA in Applied Spirituality at that university (formerly Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Carlow), he was able to have the conference hosted at that university. This also meant that INSS was able to hold its biennial conference outside the UK for the first time, thus attracting interest about the organisation among new cohorts of people and giving it a more truly international face.

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As the Executive Director of The Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE – [www.spiritualityinstitute.ie](http://www.spiritualityinstitute.ie)) in Dublin, Ireland the Links Coordinator was able to involve SpIRE in promoting the conference, in attracting presenters and other participants, and in providing volunteers for various tasks. As an administrator of SpIRE's website and social media platforms he was able to bring the conference, and thus also INSS, to the attention of what figures for the posts show were thousands of viewers. He also used SpIRE's social media platforms to draw attention to Dr Cheryl Hunt's book on the conference theme.

The Links Coordinator also avails of his teaching of postgraduate students, and other leadership roles in the field of spirituality studies, to spread the word about INSS.

### Report of the JSS Book Reviews Editor

**Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr**

Since the last AGM I have concluded eight book reviews for JSS – four in Issue 13.1 and four in Issue 13.2. The reviews cover spirituality in relation to: social work practice, disability, dementia and mental health, speech and language therapy, and counselling. Reviews also explore these broad topics: Indigenous theology and the Western worldview, the WHO and the 'spiritual dimension' of health, Mysticism, and science of life after death

### Report of the Chief Editor of the Journal

## Journal for the Study of Spirituality

**Dr Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK**

#### Background

My Annual Report on the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)* for the INSS AGM in 2022 was my final report as Chief Editor. It summarised a number of facts, figures and activities associated with the journal up to the date of the report: 23 October 2022. From September 2022, I began working with Profs Linda Ross and Wilf McSherry to effect a handover of the Editorship to them. They formally assumed the role of Co-Editors-in Chief on 17 May 2023 at a Reception to mark the occasion at the INSS International Conference in Waterford, Ireland. This Report covers the period 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023, with some details extending beyond those dates where the information is relevant to events within the reporting period.

The following paragraph is an updated version of the statement with which I have introduced previous reports:

The *Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)* is published by Taylor and Francis (T&F) in association with the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS). The journal and its title are co-owned by T&F and INSS. **The journal is now in its 13th year of publication**, with two issues per year of approximately 96 pages each, published in

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April/May and October/November. Each issue normally contains between 6-8 articles as well as book reviews, occasional announcements, and an Editorial. The latter is always free access as it is designed to provide a 'window' on the contents and to highlight key themes. Authors have the option to make their published article open access by paying a fee, otherwise only the abstracts of articles are available to those without a subscription to the journal - unless selected articles are made free access for a limited period as part of a T&F marketing promotion.<sup>1</sup> All members of INSS receive a print version of the two issues each year as part of their membership fee, as well as access to the full online archive (from 2011-date). **Over 3,000 institutions worldwide offer access to JSS. There are now approximately 22k downloads of articles each year – an increase of more than 200% since 2019.**

A key change in addition to those highlighted above is that, as part of a new contractual agreement with T&F, **INSS is now the sole owner of the journal and its title.** Dr David Rousseau will feature this in his Annual Chair's Report but I mention it here because I have been involved in the recent contractual negotiations. As its Editor and academic lead, I have generally felt it important to remain independent of contractual and financial matters affecting the journal in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest. I agreed to become involved in the latest negotiations because I had already given notice of resigning from the Editorship, and because I was able to bring the full history of the journal to bear on the discussion.

### Transfer of the Chief Editorship and associated developments

#### *Preliminaries*

Having written the original proposal for the journal in 2008 and edited it since its inception in 2010, I had intended to resign from the Editorship at the end of its tenth year of publication. However, because this coincided with issues associated with both the Covid pandemic and the transition from BASS to INSS, change at that time seemed inappropriate. However, following the 2021 AGM, I notified the INSS Executive that I wished to hand over the Editorship within the next 18 months and, in order to facilitate this, began discussions with T&F in February 2022 about establishing an electronic submission and reviewing system for the journal (ScholarOne). Hitherto, all submissions had been sent directly to my personal email address and I had then corresponded with authors and reviewers by email. Linda Ross and Wilf McSherry, who had been Executive Editors of JSS since its inception, agreed to assist in the development of the new system. The journal's Managing Editor was on maternity leave at this time and, unfortunately, plans for the new system stalled when her temporary replacement moved to another job in April. Discussions did, nevertheless, continue about recruiting and appointing a new Editor. I was delighted when, in July, Linda and Wilf offered to take on the role as joint Co-Editors-in-Chief. **Their appointment was approved unanimously by the INSS Executive Committee on 13 July 2022.**

#### *Transition period*

In September 2022, Wilf, Linda and I met in London for an 'Away Day' to discuss numerous practical details about the functioning of the journal as well as various ideas for its future

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<sup>1</sup> Between January and August 2023, T&F made several articles free access. These were selected from the full JSS archive to highlight the wide range of articles included in it, particularly those with relevance to the conference theme: *Spirituality, Critical Reflection and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World*. The publishers also kindly provided a complementary print copy of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of JSS (10.1) for every conference delegate.

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development. Sophie MacKenzie, our Social Media Co-ordinator, joined us in the afternoon to consider how this increasingly important aspect of *JSS* might be further developed. Linda, Wilf and I had several subsequent online meetings, including with our Managing Editor who had returned in August. We also attended an online training session in the use of ScholarOne. Linda and Wilf adapted the templates of the standard letters I had previously used in communicating with authors/reviewers so that they could be generated automatically. A trial workflow system was set up - although none of the three standard models offered was ideally suited to *JSS*.

Until 31 December 2022, I continued to process all submissions that came in *via* my email address. For various technical reasons the submission site did not go live until 18 February 2023. At least 15 articles were submitted during this six-week period. I declined three outright as they did not meet the journal's requirements, and invited the other contributors to resubmit when the new submission site was operational. I kept a written record of authors, titles, original submission dates *etc.* which I passed on to Linda and Wilf with recommendations about suitable reviewers. The majority of authors did subsequently resubmit through the electronic portal.

I edited and compiled the contents of issue 13.1 and Wilf and Linda wrote the Editorial. The issue was published on schedule and was available well ahead of the INSS conference where we formally marked the change of Editorship.

### Submissions and production targets

In the early part of 2022, I was concerned about the low number and quality of submissions being received but was reassured by our then Managing Editor that this was 'a noticeable trend across many journals post-pandemic'. Although the production of issue 12.1 was delayed slightly, sufficient good quality material was eventually secured to ensure that both issues in Volume 12 met their page-length targets.

The number of submissions increased quite dramatically from mid-2022 but, as I have noted in previous reports, there is a very long 'tail' in terms of quality. Our acceptance rate has dropped year-on-year and in the reporting period was around 25%.

All accepted articles are published online prior to their inclusion in the next issue. During the reporting period, the average length of time from acceptance to online publication was 25 days (this compares with 34 days in 2020).

In January 2023, T&F production targets for each volume changed from page length to article numbers. This is a welcome change, applying to issue 13.1 onwards. It was always difficult to calculate page length prior to production, especially if articles contained Figures, Tables *etc.*, and this often resulted in being slightly over the page budget – for which permission had to be sought; or under budget – in which case additional information about INSS activities was usually included. Under the new system, *JSS* is expected to include 18 items per volume (the figure is based on what has been published to date). This number includes Forum articles and book reviews as well as 'main' articles, but not Editorials or announcements. It will be possible to exceed this number if the Editors wish.

### Editorial Board

Editorial Board members have always been the primary Reviewers for articles submitted to *JSS*. The rationale for this is to work with a body of colleagues who have a 'feel' for the journal and its ethos and who are familiar with its contents. Guest Reviewers are invited to review articles when a Board member with the necessary subject or methodological expertise is unavailable,

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when an article requires specialist knowledge which is not represented on the Board, or when Board members are all fully committed. Membership of the Editorial Board is normally for three years, with the option to renew. However, in light of the forthcoming changes to the submission and reviewing system, all members were asked in late 2022 whether or not they wished to continue to serve on the Board; a small number took the opportunity to retire from it at that point. The valuable service of all former Board members is acknowledged in the journal's Editorial following their retirement, and permanently on the INSS website.

An open invitation to apply for membership of the Board was placed on the *JSS* and INSS websites and this was extended directly to a number of former Guest Reviewers and authors. In consequence, the following colleagues were welcomed onto the Board in January 2023: Laura Béres, Bernadette Flanagan, Janet Groen, Volker Kessler, Les Lancaster, and Matteo Di Placido.

A 'job description' for Editorial Board members is included as an appendix to this report. Anyone with relevant experience and an interest in joining the Board should contact Linda Ross or Wilf McSherry, who would also be pleased to hear from colleagues willing to act as occasional Guest Reviewers.

From 1 January 2023, the Board is officially designated as the 'International Editorial Board' and the 'Named Editors' are as follows:

### **Co-Editors-in-Chief**

Wilf McSherry, Staffordshire University, UK

Linda Ross, University of South Wales, UK

### **Executive Editors**

David R. Hodge, Arizona State University, USA (formerly North America Editor)

Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK (Founding Editor and former Chief Editor)

John Swinton, University of Aberdeen, UK

### **Book Reviews Editor**

Robyn Wrigley-Carr, University of Divinity, Australia

### **Social Media Editor**

Sophie MacKenzie, AECC University College, Bournemouth, UK

### **And Finally**

I cannot end this, my last, Annual Report on *JSS* without saying once more what a great privilege it has been to see the journal come into being and to flourish (despite a few difficulties along the way!). I am hugely indebted to the many BASS/INSS colleagues who have provided invaluable support and encouragement since the journal was first mooted over fifteen years ago. I am grateful, too, to colleagues at Equinox, Maney and T&F for their publishing expertise and advice; most recently, especially, to Jess Holmes, Managing Editor, and Patrick Fallon, Head of Portfolio at T&F. And I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the Editorial Board members, Guest Reviewers and authors with whom I have worked: the journal would not exist without them. Nor would it have achieved the accolade that has recently been announced: its first Impact Factor of 1.4!

At the Reception marking the formal handover of the journal's Editorship, I was surprised and delighted to be presented with a gift from the INSS Executive Committee: a beautiful engraved clock made of Waterford crystal to acknowledge my time as Chief Editor. In now wishing Linda and Wilf every success and satisfaction during their time as Editors, it seems appropriate to

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

conclude with the words of a toast to *JSS* that I gave in Waterford, an ancient port city: a wish for calm seas and a following wind for the journal and all who sail with her on her journey into the future ...



(Exeter, 19 October 2023)

## **APPENDIX** to Annual Report of the Chief Editor of *JSS*, October 2023

### **‘Job description’ for members of the International Editorial Board of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)***

International Editorial Board appointments are normally for three years in the first instance, with the option to renew after that.

The requirements of the role are essentially as follows:

#### **1. To champion *JSS***

- Be an ambassador for the journal; build, nurture, and help the Chief Editor(s) to grow a community around it.
- Increase awareness of the articles published in *JSS* in all relevant communities and amongst colleagues.
- Make *JSS* essential reading, for example by including key articles on your students’ reading lists.
- Participate whenever possible in INSS conferences and events.
- Assist in developing the social media presence of *JSS*. Sophie Mackenzie is currently our Social Media Editor and would be pleased to discuss this further.
- Flag up newsworthy articles which may have relevance for marketing the journal.

#### **2. To assist in developing the contents of the journal**

- Occasionally submit your own work for consideration.
- Encourage the submission of articles to *JSS* from expert researchers in the field, including colleagues.
- Encourage ‘rising stars’ to submit their work to *JSS* – new young talent is vital for a journal’s health and capacity-building.
- Suggest potential contributors, books for review, and book reviewers; and generate new ideas for development.

#### **3. To assist in the peer review process**

- Provide support for the peer review process and act as a reviewer when required. Editorial Board members are normally expected to review up to four articles each year (it is often fewer than that!).
- Adhere to the journal’s guidelines on [Publishing Ethics](#) to ensure that the integrity and reputation of *JSS* is maintained at all times. (Further information on ethics can be found in the [COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors](#).)

## International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

### 4. Promote online usage of JSS

- Check that your institutional library subscribes to the Journal – and if it does not, please let us know!
- Sign up for Table of Contents alerts on the JSS website and encourage colleagues and students to do so.

### 5. Provide feedback and strategic suggestions

- Attend meetings as required. A face-to-face Editorial Board meeting is normally held at the INSS biennial conference for all Board members attending the conference. Occasional meetings may also be arranged online but currently the main mode of contact between the Chief Editor(s) and Board members is generally *via* email.
- Provide the Chief Editor(s) and Taylor & Francis with any useful feedback from colleagues and friends and any suggestions you may have for the future development of the journal.

### Relationship with the International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

*For the duration of their appointment, International Editorial Board members of JSS are classified as Honorary members of the INSS. This ensures access to the whole JSS archive online, including the current issue.*

Full members of INSS receive the two issues of JSS each year in print form as well as access to the online archive. The annual membership fee for INSS is currently £65. All Editorial Board members are warmly invited to join the Network as a full member.

INSS was formerly known as the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS). Its name was formally changed in 2020 and a new website was launched. See: <https://spiritualstudiesnetwork.org/>

This continues to be a work-in-progress but, besides providing details about membership, the site contains information about the purpose and vision of INSS, the history of both JSS and BASS/INSS, and information about the biennial conferences, special interest groups (SIGs) and related matters, including support for doctoral students and other researchers and scholars involved in developing the field of spirituality studies.

International Editorial Board members are encouraged to make use of, and make contributions to/suggestions about, both the website and INSS itself. Members associated with a centre, organisation or institution with a focus on the study of spirituality are invited to contact Michael O’Sullivan, the INSS Links Co-ordinator, to discuss the possibility of creating an online link.

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## Approval

This report was approved by the Executive Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 and signed on behalf of the Board by:

*Joan Walton*

Dr Joan Walton  
Chair of the Executive Committee





# INSS

**International Network for  
the Study of Spirituality**

**Research ~ Education ~ Practice**

## **Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements**

**1<sup>st</sup> of February 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023**

### **Annual Report of the Directors and Trustees**

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Company Registration Number: 7549446 (England and Wales)  
Registered Charity No. 1166990

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## Company Information

NAME	The International Network for the Study of Spirituality
COMPANY TYPE	Limited by guarantee and without a share capital
DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES	The elected members of the Executive Committee
COMPANY SECRETARY	David Rousseau
COMPANY NUMBER	7549446 (England and Wales)
CHARITY NUMBER	1166990
REGISTERED OFFICE	30 Leigh Close Addlestone Surrey KT15 1EL
BANKERS	HSBC Bank North Finchley branch 789 High Road, North Finchley London N12 8JX

# **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

## **Trustees, Directors and Officers for the Period 1 February 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023**

### **Elected Members of the Executive Committee:**

Dr Adam Boughey – Resigned April 2022  
Dr Cheryl Hunt  
Dr Sophie MacKenzie  
Prof. Wilfred McSherry  
Dr. Michael O’Sullivan  
Prof. Melanie Rogers  
Prof. Linda Ross  
Dr David Rousseau  
Dr Joan Walton  
Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr

For the purposes of the Companies Act 1985 the elected members of the Executive Committee are Directors of the Company. The Company Directors are also the Trustees of the Charity.

### **Co-opted Members of the Executive Committee**

Mrs Julie Billingham  
Mrs Helen McSherry

### **Executive Committee Appointments**

Chair:	Dr David Rousseau
Honorary Treasurer:	Mrs Helen McSherry
Company Secretary:	Dr. David Rousseau
Membership Secretary:	Prof. Linda Ross
Journal Chief Editor:	Dr Cheryl Hunt
Book Reviews Editor:	Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr
Conference Chair:	Dr Michael O'Sullivan
Conference Co-chair:	Dr Joan Walton
Accountant:	Mrs Helen McSherry
Links Co-ordinator:	Dr Michael O'Sullivan
Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator:	Prof. Wilfred McSherry
Social Media Co-ordinator:	Dr Sophie MacKenzie
Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIGs Co-ordinator:	Prof Melanie Rogers
Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology	Mrs Julie Billingham
Digital Infrastructure Manager	Dr Adam Boughey - Resigned

# **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

## **Report of the Directors and Trustees for the year ended 31 January 2023**

The Directors and Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 January 2023.

### **Governance**

The International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS) was incorporated in 2011, and is governed by Articles of Association. INSS is both a company limited by guarantee without a share capital and a registered charity. INSS is controlled by its elected Directors, who are also its Trustees, via an Executive Committee comprised of the elected Directors and also co-opted members.

### **Objectives of the charity**

The purposes of INSS are to advance education for the public benefit in the subject of spirituality by promoting:

- a) the critical study of all aspects of spirituality;
- b) education and dissemination regarding these matters; and
- c) the development of inclusive and respectful policies and professional practices.

### **Principal activities**

The principal activities of INSS during the year were the publication of its journal, the further development of its website and other digital infrastructure, planning for the 2023 biennial conference, continuing the re-negotiation of the Journal publishing contract, and hosting meetings of the special interest groups on “Spirituality and Consciousness” and “Spirituality and the Arts”.

### **Public benefit statement**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit in shaping its objectives for the year and planning its future activities. Specific details of how these objectives have been achieved and maintained during the year can be found in the accompanying reports of the Officers.

### **Financial review**

The Statement of Financial Activities shows a net gain for the year of £37,560 and reserves at the year-end of £62,265.

# **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

## **Reserves policy**

The reserves are the net assets of INSS. It is the policy of the Trustees to set aside the reserves to meet current and future expenditure regarding the operation of INSS and the pursuit of its objectives, and to cover any unforeseen deficits. The Trustees consider that the reserves need to be increased in the future to ensure the financial security of the Charity, to support its growth and to enhance its services.

## **Directors and Trustees**

All of the elected members of Executive Committee are Directors of the Company and Trustees of the charity. All the members listed above served throughout the year, except Dr Adam Boughey, who resigned in April 2022. No remuneration is paid to members of the Executive Committee in their capacity as Trustees or Directors. Dr David Rousseau stood down as Chair just after the end of the period, and the Executive Committee appointed Dr Joan Walton as the new Chair in February 2023.

## **Risk management**

The Trustees review, as part of their regular Executive Committee meetings, all potential areas of risk which may affect the Society. Procedures are in place to identify and mitigate risks.

## **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements**

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Company for that year. In preparing the financial statements the trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Society will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Network and to enable them to

## **International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)**

ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Network and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

### **Reporting Basis**

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions in part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

### **Approval**

This report was approved by the board of directors on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by:

*Joan Walton*

Dr Joan Walton  
Chair

*Helen McSherry*

Mrs Helen McSherry  
Treasurer

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## Income and Expenditure Account for the Period Ended 31st of January 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Turnover	2	43,470	15,924
Expenditure			
Charitable Activities	3	5,159	5,682
Administration expenses	4	751	740
Net Income		<u>37,560</u>	<u>9,502</u>

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## Balance sheet As at 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand:		82,948	29,146
Prepaid expenses	5	443	-
Total current assets:		83,391	29,146
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6	(21,126)	(4,440)
Net current assets:		62,265	24,706
Total assets less current liabilities:		62,265	24,706
Total net assets:		62,265	24,706
<b>Representing:</b>			
Accumulated Reserves at 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2022:		24,706	15,204
Net Income for the year		37,560	9,502
Accumulated Reserves at 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023		62,265	24,706

For the year ending 31 January 2023 the Company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on the 22nd of October 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by:

*Joan Walton*

Dr Joan Walton  
Chair

*Helen McSherry*

Mrs Helen McSherry  
Treasurer



# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Period Ended 31st of January 2023

### 1. Accounting policies

#### *Basis of measurement and preparation of accounts*

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

### 2. Income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Conference fees	-	5,940
Grants and donations *	35,000	500
Membership subscriptions	8,319	8734
Special Interest Group meeting registration fees	144	-
Journal publisher editorial sponsorship	-	750
Bank interest	7	-
	<u>43,470</u>	<u>15,924</u>

\* In April 2022 INSS received a grant of £35,000 from the GS Gives Annual Giving Fund, an account within Goldman Sachs Gives (UK).

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## 3. Expenditure: Charitable Activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Conference expenses	-	555
Journal expenses	930	-
Journal publisher services	3,060	4,400
PayPal expenses	812	159
Bank charges	25	-
Website Informational Pages	<u>332</u>	<u>528</u>
	<u>5,159</u>	<u>5,682</u>

## 4. Administrative Expenses

	2023	2022
	£	£
Meetings expenses	-	63
Advertising & Promotions	332	230
Digital tools	346	424
Bank charges	60	10
Regulatory Fees	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>
	<u>751</u>	<u>740</u>

# International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

## 5. Prepaid expenses

	2023	2022
	£	£
2023 Conference support & promotion	<u>443</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>443</u>	<u>-</u>

## 6. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Deferred income from 2023 Conference	21,126	-
Journal publisher services	<u>-</u>	<u>4,440</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>4,440</u>

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the International Network for the Study of Spirituality ( " INSS " )**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of INSS for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of INSS you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ( " the Act " ). I report in respect of my examination of the INSS accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities ( Accounts and Reports ) Regulation 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a " true and fair view " which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *D.J. Milburn*

Name: David Milburn

Professional qualification: Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Address: Barrow Styles House, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 1EZ

Date: *25th October 2023*