



INSS

**International Network for
the Study of Spirituality**

Research ~ Education ~ Practice

**Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers
1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024**

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

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

Trustees, Directors and Officers for the period 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024

Elected Members of the Executive Committee:

Dr Cheryl Hunt
Dr Sophie MacKenzie
Mrs Helen McSherry
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 MSc (resigned 23/01/2024)
Mr Armando Lüscher (co-opted 29/3/23)
Dr Katja Milner (co-opted 23/01/24)
Dr Louise Spiers (co-opted 23/01/24)

Executive Committee Appointments

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Chair: | Dr Joan Walton |
| Honorary Treasurer: | Mrs Helen McSherry |
| Accountant: | Mrs Helen McSherry |
| Company Secretary: | Dr. David Rousseau |
| Membership Secretary: | Dr Katja Milner |
| Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator: | Dr Cheryl Hunt |
| Journal Co-Editor-in-Chief: | Prof. Wilfred McSherry |
| Journal Co-Editor-in-Chief: | Prof. Linda Ross |
| Conference 2023 Co-ordinator: | Dr Michael O'Sullivan |
| Conference 2025 Co-ordinator: | Dr Louise Spiers |
| Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIGs Co-ordinator: | Prof Melanie Rogers |
| Book Reviews Editor: | Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr |
| Social Media Co-ordinator: | Dr Sophie MacKenzie |
| Links Co-ordinator: | Dr Michael O'Sullivan |
| Digital Infrastructure Manager: | Mr Armando Lüscher |
| Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology | Mrs Julie Billingham MSc (resigned) |

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 2024.

Report of the Chair

Dr Joan Walton

This is the first time I have contributed as Chair to the Annual Report, having taken that role over from Dr David Rousseau in January 2023. I would like to give my thanks and great appreciation to David for what he achieved during his time as Chair, leading the committee in a time of transition for INSS, including achieving Charitable status, changing our name and the Articles, and taking us to a point where we could move into the future in a positive way.

The year 2023-2024 was an active one, with an in-person conference taking place in May 2023, the establishing of an initiative to encourage new people to become actively involved in helping to develop INSS as an organisation, the transition of editorship of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality, the continuation of three Special Interest Groups, other participative online activities such as the Conversational, and ongoing discussions with Taylor & Francis with the aim of improving the benefits emerging from our relationship with them. More details on each of these are included in this report.

Conference

The major event during the year was the Seventh International Conference INSS conference held in Waterford, Ireland from 16th to 18th May 2023, on the theme of 'Spirituality, Critical Reflection, and Professional Practice in an Uncertain World'. The event was excellently co-ordinated by Michael O'Sullivan, who led a team which resulted in a conference that was fully subscribed, and a great success socially, academically and financially. The main public and keynote presentations were given by Dr Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK ; Professor Jonathan M. Wooding, University of Sydney, Australia, Professor John Swinton, University of Aberdeen, UK. Dr Niamh Brennan, Independent Scholar and Author, Ireland, and Dr Michael O'Sullivan, South East Technological University, Waterford, Ireland. More information about these presentations are to be found on the INSS website.

Plans almost immediately began for the next conference, to be held at Northampton University in 2025. Louise Spiers is to act as Conference Co-ordinator for this event, and an organising committee was established in January 2024. The title of the conference on this occasion is to be *Spirituality, Consciousness, Technology, and Wellbeing: Implications for Research, Education and Practice*.

Operational Group

A major initiative during the year was to put a call-out to people interested in being involved in the future development of INSS. This resulted in a Focus Group being held in December 2023, attended by 8 people willing to discuss potential new roles. A number of

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suggestions were made, one being the creation of a new Special Interest Group in Spirituality and Education, which has since been initiated. A further outcome was an Operational Group under the excellent leadership of Professor Melanie Rogers, which is now meeting on a regular basis, and is generating good ideas for moving forward as an organisation.

Technical and operational support

In March 2023, Armando Lüscher was appointed Digital Infrastructure Manager, and co-opted to the Executive Committee. Throughout the year, Armando has provided an invaluable service, offering technical support when required, and helping to improve the website. In January 2024, Julie Billingham stood down from co-option to the Executive Committee, but has offered to continue to support the committee on an ad hoc basis if required. I thank Julie for the contribution she has made to technical and operational support, and her willingness to continue to be responsive to need.

Special Interest Groups

Three Special Interest Groups continued throughout the year. The first one to be initiated was the 'Spirituality and Consciousness' SIG, which in fact came to a planned close early in 2024. Their experience throughout the 2+ years that it ran was shared in a Galileo Commission Summit held in May 2024, during which each participant spoke about the learning they had gained through the time of the monthly meetings. This was no doubt a significant subject to explore, and will be developed in different contexts as INSS evolves.

The Spirituality and Arts SIG continues to be successful, with Annalisa Burello, June Boyce-Tillman and Lila Moore as Chairs. Spirituality, Mental Health and Wellbeing is also flourishing, with Katja Milner and Jill Buckeldee as Chairs. I would like to thank all the chairs, and the supporting members of the Executive Committee, for enabling these SIGs to be the success that they are.

Journal Editorship

Dr Cheryl Hunt, our Journal's Chief Editor, indicated in her previous report her wish to pass her role to Professors Wilf McSherry and Linda Ross in early 2023. They worked together in 2022 to ensure a smooth transition, and Cheryl worked 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.

In May 2023, Wilf and Linda formally took over the roles as co-Chief Editors of the Journal for the Study of Spirituality. Cheryl had with great effectiveness undertaken the role of Chief Editor since its inception, and her role in enabling it to thrive successfully is deeply appreciated. Taylor & Francis have offered us an online submission management system, which has experienced some problems in the initial stages, but great effort is going into making this a more efficient system for receiving and reviewing articles.

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Co-optation to the Execs

In addition to Armando Lüscher and Helen McSherry, the Directors co-opted Louise Spiers as Conference Co-ordinator and Katja Milner as Membership Secretary. They are all contributing a significant amount to the flourishing of INSS, and I would like to thank them for it. I would also like to thank all members of the Executive Committee for the time they give INSS, and for helping to make it the successful organisation it deserves to be.

Report of the Honorary Treasurer

Mrs Helen McSherry

We have had another good year financially. Our main income being from the conference held in the middle of the year in Waterford, Ireland. The 2023 Conference made a profit of just over £8,300 with the help of sponsorship by SpIRE and a SETU research grant. Membership fees of £7,031 were received and we paid Taylor and Francis the sum of £3,825 for the publishing of the Journal. Receipts from the Special Interest Group meeting registration fees has grown by £104 to £248. Although not received within this financial year, £4,558 of 2023 royalties from Taylor and Francis for the Journal have been included in this year's accounts as payment due, and this amount has been received by us since the end of our fiscal year.

Our administrative expenses of £956 have increased this year due to the conference, to include costs for our website, marketing and promotional work. Our PayPal facility expense decreased from £812 to £307 as most of the activity for the Conference was incurred last year. Our net income for the year was £12,506.

Our bank balance at the end of the financial year (31 January 2024) was a healthy £75,538.

Report of the Membership Secretary

Dr Katja Milner

I was delighted to be invited onto the INSS Executive Committee as Membership Secretary in December 2023. Membership for the end of the last financial year was a total of 177, made up of 129 Standard members, 46 Honorary members (those on INSS Executive and/or the Editorial Board for the 'Journal for the Study of Spirituality') and 2 Honorary members also subscribed. Membership figures for the previous year on 31st January 2023 were 224 in total, made up of 179 standard and 45 honorary members, indicating a small decline in membership over last year. INSS attracts membership from across a wide variety of countries internationally including UK, Europe, North America, Australasia, Asia Pacific, South Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Over the course of this year, the INSS team have been looking at developing ways to promote the organisation and attract new membership. This has resulted in the introduction of a new concessionary rate for students and those with lower incomes. These have been recently

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promoted through the creation of new INSS leaflets by Cheryl and the presence of INSS at conferences and events such as the recent Eurotas 24 conference. Cheryl and Armando's streamlining of the INSS website also offers a central and informative hub for members. As well as clearly outlining INSS activities, events and SIGs, further potentials are being explored to create platforms for displaying relevant work of members, such as the thesis abstract page.

Additionally, Katja and Armando, with support from Julie, have been working on streamlining the membership management system in light of recent requirements and to leverage new opportunities.

Report of the Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator

Dr Cheryl Hunt, University of Exeter, UK

I agreed to take on the role of Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator as from January 2024, and to attempt to scope the role after stepping down as Chief Editor of the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality (JSS)* in May 2023. Having seen the production of Issue 13.1 of the journal through to completion, I remain an Executive Editor and liaised closely with the new Co-Editors-in-Chief, Prof. Linda Ross and Prof. Wilf McSherry during the transition period. Together with Dr David Rousseau and Prof. Roderick Hunt (external consultant with expertise in publishing contracts and working with the Charity Commission), I was also heavily involved in negotiating a new contract between INSS and Taylor & Francis (T&F), the publishers of *JSS*. The negotiations were successfully concluded in October 2023 when INSS assumed sole ownership of the *JSS* title (hitherto it had been jointly owned with the publisher).

As part of my Research and Scholarship scoping exercise, it became clear that, in order to encourage the involvement of students and independent scholars, INSS needed to be able to offer them a reduced membership fee. I therefore negotiated an addendum to the *JSS* contract whereby we are now able to offer a concessionary annual membership fee of £25 to students and others on a low income which includes online-only access to the journal.

I also updated many of the content pages on the INSS website and, on the recommendation of our Digital Infrastructure Manager, Armando Luscher, created a 'News' column on the Homepage to highlight forthcoming events. In the process, it became evident that, because both the website and our various activities have developed organically over many years, there was a lack of clarity about how they fitted together and, therefore, about their combined contribution to the field of spirituality studies.

In consequence, I prepared a discussion document for consideration by the Executive Committee to inform future planning. It highlighted the many achievements of BASS/INSS since its early beginnings in 2008 and how these relate to our Charitable Objectives, as well as some aspects of our work which we have yet to develop fully; for example, how research in the field of spirituality studies may be used to influence policy, not only at institutional levels but in the wider political arena.

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The discussion about future planning took place in February 2024 so, together with the developments that have taken place since, it falls outside the reporting period for this Annual Report. Nevertheless, I include a summary of some of those developments here since they are already helping to shape the future of INSS and its contribution to research and scholarship in the field.

In brief, INSS has four key strands to its mission to develop the field of spirituality studies:

1. *Journal of Spirituality Studies (JSS)*;
2. Biennial international conferences;
3. Ongoing scholarly activities;
4. The provision of scholarly information about relevant materials and links to other organisations and events.

With Armando's help, the structure of the website has now been changed to better reflect these strands (though there is much more still to do!).

In terms of the 'Activities' strand, for historical reasons there was some confusion about the relationship between the Spirituality Scholars Network (SSN) and the Special Interest Groups (SIGs), including whether the SSN was a SIG in its own right, and who might be entitled to attend events hosted by the various groups. I have worked closely with Prof. Melanie Rogers, our SSN & SIG Co-ordinator, to try to resolve these matters.

Although there is an inevitable overlap between activities, in essence we see the function of the SSN as two-fold:

- (i) *to provide support and encouragement* to scholars and researchers, especially those relatively new to the field, and/or to those who are undertaking research independently or in institutions where few others are working in the field of spirituality; and
- (ii) *to facilitate collaborative working between members across institutions, for example in developing research proposals and/or accounts of good practice.* By contrast, the SIGs have tended to arise out of particular interests of members, mainly those already established in their own disciplines and professions. In consequence, they provide networking opportunities for more experienced researchers and practitioners (as well as those new to the field) and the space to explore specific topics and related methodological approaches in greater depth in a safe environment that is not always available in institutional contexts.

With Melanie, I have been instrumental in establishing a new 'Operational Group' comprised of SIG Chairs and others involved in developing our 'Activities' strand. Armando Luscher and Annalisa Burello (Co-chair of the Spirituality and the Arts SIG) have both been working with the operational group to enable members to further develop information on the INSS webpages relating to the SIGs, to streamline enrolment in events, and to enable SIG members to list and share personal/professional interests if they wish to do so.

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With regard to the 'Provision of scholarly information' strand, I am pleased to say that Dr Katja Milner has agreed to undertake a funded project to develop a webpage which will include abstracts of recently, or soon to be, completed doctoral theses; and we are also exploring the possibility of developing another webpage listing INSS members' recent academic publications. These will provide a valuable resource highlighting new and ongoing work and publications in the field of spirituality studies - and will complement the webpage containing the impressive and ever-growing list of publications reviewed in *JSS* (collated by Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr). I have also recently initiated a page showing forthcoming events provided by INSS associates to provide an additional dimension to our well-established 'Links' page which is co-ordinated by Dr Michael O'Sullivan. Discussions are currently taking place about the possibility of developing a YouTube channel to host video recordings of keynote lectures from INSS conferences and other video materials generated by SIGs.

I conclude with an outline of suggested 'ways forward' in relation to our Activities and Information strands that I presented to the Executive Committee in February:

| SSN (support / networking) | SIGs (topic focused / in-depth discussion) (members decide whether open/closed; could be a mix, inc some sessions open to wider public) | Guest lectures (poss open to public) (poss with a partner org) | Web-based developments (open access but based on member input) a. Thesis page b. Members' recent publications c. Academic progs assoc with spirituality d. Events (conferences etc) e. Members' collaborative research projects |
|---|--|---|---|
| Symposia; 'Conversational'; Combined events with similar student groups (eg SMN, Alef) | Workshops (share resources/best practice) Collaborative research projects (arranged independently by members) | | |

Some, as noted, have already been implemented. I hope to report on the successful development of others in due course.

Report of the Co-Chief Editors of the Journal

Prof. Linda Ross & Prof. Wilf McSherry

Background

This is the first Annual Report that we have jointly compiled for the Journal for the Study of Spirituality (*JSS*) since we formally assumed the role as Co-editors-in-Chief on 17th May 2023 at the INSS International Conference in Waterford, Ireland. This Report covers the period 17th May 2023 to 16th October 2024. The figures presented in this report are taken from the *JSS* publishers Report received on 3rd October 2024.

An update on the transfer of editorship and the transition period

The transfer of editorship from Dr Cheryl Hunt to us coincided with a shift from a manual system of administering and co-ordinating manuscripts submitted to the Journal to an online platform. The system provided by Taylor and Francis is the ScholarOne submissions system.

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This was a significant moment for the ongoing management of the journal meaning that everything was managed electronically within one system. While this was a very welcome step it did present with some significant technical challenges and issues around developing the technical/digital competence of the newly appointed Editors-in-Chief of the Journal. It also resulted in a significant increase in the number of submissions requiring screening and review.

The challenge of identifying reviewers and the processes involved in the administration of this task consumes a significant amount of both editors' time. We have undertaken several strategies to try and reduce this activity but despite these the process in some instances can still be quite protracted.

There have also been some technical challenges that have impacted on the submission and review processes of manuscripts which has resulted in a lengthy delay from submission to final decision. The help received from the different teams within Taylor and Francis has been inconsistent but sometimes helpful.

Submission and Production Targets

Global reach & usage

The number of institutional subscriptions is at its highest (2834 in 2023).

The number of downloads is at its highest at just over 19,000 at August 2024, almost 2,000 higher than at the same timepoint in 2023. So far for 2024 the downloads are mainly from North America followed by Europe and then Asia.

No of articles submitted & turnaround time & production

The number of submissions for 2024 (n=119) has already outstripped the total papers submitted in the whole of 2023 (n=102); the highest number of submissions were from India followed by Iran.

The acceptance rate remains steady at 11% (for 2023/24) and the majority of articles are research papers.

Most papers submitted in 2023 received a first decision within 29 days, and the average speed of publication following acceptance is now at its highest, 20 days in 2024 compared with 71 days in 2017.

The move to the online Scholar One system probably accounts for these positive changes.

Top performing papers were as follows

Top downloaded article 'The perceived link between dreams and the spiritual life: an exploratory study' by Vasile et al (2023). (3845 downloads in last 12 months)

Top cited article & top altmetric score 'Spirituality & economics' by Zsolnai, (2022) (8 citations last 12 months, altmetric score 6)

Highest altmetric score (10) in the last year was 'Reflections on a global 'Groundhog Day' by Hunt (2021).

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Metrics

At the 2022 conference we were pleased to report a first ever Impact Factor for the Journal of 1.4. This dropped to 0.7 in 2023 following changes in the way this figure is calculated, affecting all journals.

The Scopus CiteScore has steadily increased year on year from 0.6 in 2018 to 2.5 in 2023, and the Journal has jumped from 78th place (out of 484) to 20th place (out of 644) religious studies journals in 2023.

Author satisfaction

Author overall satisfaction and satisfaction with reviewers has remained fairly stable since 2020 at around 90%.

Editorial Board

A unique feature of INSS is the breadth of disciplines included in its 'study of spirituality', for example, health & wellbeing, economics, social sciences, religious studies, business, education, arts, humanities. This results in a kaleidoscope of fascinating papers with something for everyone. However, it also makes it difficult to find suitable experts to review the papers. We, therefore, appeal to you to consider joining our Editorial Board where you would be invited to review around 3 papers per year. As a small 'thank you' you would have free on-line access to the journal including back issues. We are in particular need of experts in spirituality and psychiatry, arts and business, bibliometrics, counselling, theology, Asian philosophies and practices, religious studies and world religions. We would also welcome new members to the International Editorial Board with expertise in statistical methods.

Final Words

We are pleased that since taking over the editorship of the journal we have met the required targets of 4 issues. We are delighted to be building up a reserve of manuscripts for future issues which should speed up the production process going forward.

In summary the transition to an online submission system has been a testing and turbulent time for editors and authors alike with several 'teething' problems and 'gremlins' that have impacted quite negatively upon the quality and experience of the submission, review and production processes. Despite these challenges most authors in the 'Authors Survey' indicated they were very satisfied with their experience.

We would like to end this report by extending a special thank you to all our International Editorial Board Members who have provided us with incredible support and all the guest reviewers who have given so generously of their time and expertise. A special thank you to our Book Reviews editor Robyn Wrigley-Carr and Social Media Editor Sophie MacKenzie for their commitment and support with each volume. Without all this collective effort it would be impossible to sustain the production and high standard of the journal.

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Report of the Links Co-ordinator & Conference 2023 Co-ordinator

Dr Michael O'Sullivan

Outreach to other academic organisations in the field of spirituality studies continued in 2023, seeking to establish links for mutual co-operations and promotion. The main way this was done in 2023 was through the 7th biennial conference of INSS in May of that year. The Links Coordinator served as the lead organiser and Chair of the conference. It was the first time the conference was held outside the UK and it drew more than 150 delegates from 25 countries and 5 continents. There were over 80 presentations and the feedback from the conference shows that it was an outstanding success.

In his capacity as the Executive Director of the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education (SpIRE) and Emeritus Senior Lecturer and founding member of the Spirituality in Society and the Professions (SpirSoP) Research Group at South East Technological University in Waterford, Ireland, where the conference was held, the Links Coordinator was able to involve colleagues from these entities and to establish links between them and INSS. In 2023 in his capacity as the administrator of the SpIRE website and social media and as editor of SpIRE's online newsletter he was also able to draw attention to the work of INSS and disseminate information about its journal, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, for which he serves as a member of the Editorial Board. During the year he also included his customary piece about INSS in the SpIRE Annual Report which he prepares and produces, and brought the work of colleagues in INSS and the many activities of INSS to the attention of his postgraduate students.

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

Prof. Melanie Rogers

The Spirituality Scholars' Network (SSN) offers events to INSS members and interested scholars with support from Sophie MacKenzie, Cheryl Hunt, and Alex Pimor. The SSN team meets every 2 months to discuss how to develop and engage members. This year we have instigated an operational group which includes Special Interest Group and Conversational representatives to meet every 3-4 months to plan all events for INSS. The SSN aims to support postgraduate, early career researchers and scholars in sharing their interests, experiences, and projects in the field of spirituality studies. Sophie continues to post regularly on social media.

In 2022 we launched "The Conversational" led by Alex Pimor to give time and space within which scholars of spirituality in the broadest sense join to share and discuss thoughts, ideas, theories and practices in deeper and more meaningful conversations on a wide range of topics of interests. This initiative has been very successful in terms of attendance and engagement with 15-20 INSS members attending each event. In 2023, we held 3 Conversational sessions, as planned (March, June and November). In 2024, 5 Conversationals have been scheduled (March,

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July, October, and 2 in November). The sessions are advertised via emails and on the INSS website.

We have three Special Interest Groups (SIG) running at the moment. The Spirituality and Consciousness SIG closed in the summer after running as a closed group for 18 months. The experiences of this SIG were presented at the Galileo Commission in May 2024. The recording is available here: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/11168831>

The Spirituality and Education Special Interest Group:

The Spirituality and Education Special Interest Group (SEDSIG) is co-chaired by Professor Sara Horton-Deutsch and Dr Patricia Carlisle. The group held its first meeting online in May 2024 and we have met on two occasions, spending time sharing our interests and getting to know each other. The SEDSIG welcomes participation from those interested in the interplay of spirituality and education in all its diversity - from early childhood education to adult and higher education, as well as in professional contexts, voluntary organization, and community settings. We aim to enable participants to explore how spirituality relates to varied but complementary interests in practices, theories, and policies associated with education, teaching, and learning throughout the life course.

Through discussion between the co-chairs and Executive members we identified the value of moving into a new phase of development which continues to value building relationship whilst also welcoming speakers to present their interest regarding the interplay of spirituality and education. In the interests of keeping the SEDSIG inclusive and to support its development, we welcome diverse forms of inquiry, from evolving ideas to established works. Our next gathering in October will invite those present to explore the development of the SEDSIG to engage and discover our collective interests in this field of interest. Through this process we will invite individuals to consider sharing their work in future meetings.

Spirituality Mental Health and Wellbeing Special Interest Group:

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Special Interest Group had its first meeting in September 2022. It meets 4 - 5 times each year and focusses on exploring spirituality, mental health and wellbeing in the context of research, scholarship, healthcare and therapeutic practice. It works as a co-created safe space which welcomes diversity. Each meeting has a topic and following a short presentation the group is encouraged to reflect together and discuss pertinent themes and issues, as well as skill-share and inspire ideas and learning. Recent topics have included 'Nurturing, Self-care and Spirituality', 'Finding Hope in Existential Crises', 'Meaning making in Spirituality and Mental Health', 'Religious Disaffiliation' and 'Epistemic Injustice in Spiritual and Mental Health Contexts'. The group is attended by an average of 15 people per session which supports a diverse, inspiring and friendly atmosphere for discussion, sharing and community networking.

Spirituality and the Arts SIG:

The Special Interest Group focussing on 'Spirituality and the Arts' (SASIG) has been meeting since 2022. The SASIG events provide a platform for artists, wellbeing practitioners and

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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. From 2024 we will also plan to hold open discussions quarterly for members to dialogue with one another.

From February 2023 until September 2024, the SASIG has hosted nine scholarly talks on diverse topics, presented by a range of speakers with unique perspectives and areas of expertise, as follows in chronological order:

Prof. Louis Lagana from the University of Malta lectured on his research about Malta's Neolithic temples and gave some explanations and interpretations regarding the theory that worship of a 'Mother Goddess' existed in Malta more than 5,000 years ago. This theory is based on the number of figurines found in different temples on the islands.

Continuing our series of talks inspired by the four spiritual elements of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth, the artist Alison Churchill gave a talk about Water as a Spiritual Medium based on a 10-year journey of investigation through art and Zen calligraphy practice. In addition to stills of her art pieces and installations, she shared her water-inspired videos captured on her camera phone.

Dr Karel James Bouse's talk, "Expressive Arts in Shamanic Practice," presented a multidisciplinary analysis of the function and presence of expressive arts in traditional shamanic cultures and contemporary Neo-shamanic practices.

Annalia Burrello, MSc, discussed Marina Abramović's retrospective at the Royal Academy, focusing on the theme of The Artist as Shaman. Annalisa explained how Abramović's performance art became a ritualistic and healing shamanic practice.

Prof. Rina Arya gave a talk entitled: "Locating Religion in Contemporary Art". Rina argued that the place of religion in the context of contemporary art is fraught and complex and discussed three prominent ways in which religion is explored in contemporary art: in sociopolitics, in art that transgresses, and in the creation of spaces of contemplation, some of which may be 'religious'.

Dr Lila Moore's talk was based on her practice-based PhD in Dance on Screen, which she completed in 2001 at Middlesex University. She presented a thematic analysis of the film *Gaia Mysterious Rhythms* and the concept of "Screen-Dance as a Novel Art Form and Rite of Passage." She demonstrated a young woman's dance film rite as a spiritual, healing, and transformative journey inspired by ancient and contemporary mythopoetic, imaginal and magickal images and themes. Video clips from the film accompanied her talk.

Singer-songwriter Siân Brown, MSc, explored the topic: "Can therapeutic songwriting be a form of subtle activism?" She presented songs from her music album inspired by Anne Baring's book *The Dream of the Cosmos: A Quest for the Soul*. She discussed her creative process as she moved through the book's six sections, producing two songs per section.

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Prof. June Boyce-Tillman presented Hildegard of Bingen with vivid illustrations, historical and theological reflections, and vocal demonstrations. The talk was in lieu of Prof. Fay Brauer's talk, which was postponed to the fall. We thank June for filling in at the last minute.

Our last talk in 2024 was by Prof. Fay Brauer, who presented "Composing Symmorphies": Annie Besant's Theosophies, František Kupka's Chromatic Music, and Their Astral Visions." Brauer discussed Kupka's paintings in the context of his magnetic and mediumistic experiences as they resonated with Annie Besant's Man and his Bodies, C. W. Leadbeater's The Astral Plane, and their jointly authored Thought Forms.

In addition, since January 2023, the SASIG has hosted six provocations and open discussions on the theme of The Arts as Spirituality. One of these was a provocation entitled "Reconciling Humanistic vs Pan-psychic Spirituality," a conversation between Annalisa Burello and Degard. They presented and discussed their different conceptions and experiences of spirituality based on scholarly research and artistic practice.

From the outset, our goal was to 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. This year, we have continued to provide supportive presentation contexts for artists, and the outcome of Siân Brown's presentation is a case study, demonstrating the potential effectiveness of our framework. The recording of Siân Brown's SASIG presentation generated significant interest in her work and led her to begin recording the Anne Baring album with an excellent female producer. Moreover, after many attempts, she was finally able to secure an Arts Council of Ireland grant to fund the professional production of her album. It is, therefore, a case study demonstrating the valuable support of our SASIG setting, including the YouTube video channel, which, based on the scholarly and creative assets of the presentations, can function as a unique scholarly archive for the arts and the spiritual.

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.

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (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 14.1 and four in Issue 14.2. The reviews cover spirituality in relation to: narrative therapy, architectural education, philosophy and sustainable development policy. Reviews also explore these broad topics: mysticism, situating spirituality in context, practice and power, extraordinary experiences of the afterlife, and varieties of spiritual experience.

Report of the Digital Infrastructure Manager

Mr Armando Lüscher

From the website point of view, one of the bigger changes that is happening now, is that the SIGs are moving to the dedicated events feature provided by Wild Apricot (our website hosting service provider). This means that in the future the whole management of events and the respective registration process (including all related announcement and reminder emails) will be taken care of from one central place. The event listings for each SIG as well as the historic meetings will be easily accessible going forward. There will still be some initial fine-tuning required to get all SIG chairs on board and trained up to do this, but it's looking very promising.

For 2025, the design of the website itself will be a topic that needs looking into. With the new concessionary membership level to expand the membership, we need to make sure that all the INSS offerings are easily accessible to everyone and that it's clear what INSS provides to members and beyond.

Approval

This report was approved by the Executive Committee on the 3rd of November 2024 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

1st of February 2023 to 31st of January 2024

Annual Report of the Directors and Trustees

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| Report of the Directors | 4 |
| Income and Expenditure Account | 7 |
| Balance Sheet | 8 |
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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 2023 to 31st of January 2024

Elected Members of the Executive Committee:

Dr Cheryl Hunt
Dr Sophie MacKenzie
Mrs Helen McSherry
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 MSc (resigned 23/01/2024)
Mr Armando Lüscher (co-opted 29/3/23)
Dr Katja Milner (co-opted 23/01/24)
Dr Louise Spiers (co-opted 23/01/24)

Executive Committee Appointments

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Chair: | Dr Joan Walton |
| Honorary Treasurer: | Mrs Helen McSherry |
| Accountant: | Mrs Helen McSherry |
| Company Secretary: | Dr. David Rousseau |
| Membership Secretary: | Dr Katja Milner |
| Research and Scholarship Co-ordinator: | Dr Cheryl Hunt |
| Journal Co-Editor-in-Chief: | Prof. Wilfred McSherry |
| Journal Co-Editor-in-Chief: | Prof. Linda Ross |
| Conference 2023 Co-ordinator: | Dr Michael O'Sullivan |
| Conference 2025 Co-ordinator: | Dr Louise Spiers |
| Spirituality Scholars' Network and SIGs Co-ordinator: | Prof Melanie Rogers |
| Book Reviews Editor: | Assoc. Prof. Robyn Wrigley-Carr |
| Social Media Co-ordinator: | Dr Sophie MacKenzie |
| Links Co-ordinator: | Dr Michael O'Sullivan |
| Digital Infrastructure Manager: | Mr Armando Lüscher |
| Strategy Advisor on Operations & Technology | Mrs Julie Billingham MSc (resigned) |

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

Report of the Directors and Trustees for the year ended 31 January 2024

The Directors and Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 January 2024.

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, delivering the 2023 biennial conference, completing the re-negotiation of the Journal publishing contract, and hosting meetings of the special interest groups on “Spirituality and Education”, “Spirituality and the Arts”, “Spirituality and Consciousness”, and “Spirituality, Mental Health and Wellbeing”. INSS also hosted “The Conversational”, a discussion forum on spirituality matters.

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 £12,506 and reserves at the year-end of £74,772.

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. No remuneration is paid to members of the Executive Committee in their capacity as Trustees or Directors. Dr David Rousseau stood down as Chair at the end of the previous 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 ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

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 3rd of November 2024 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 2024

| | Notes | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|-------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| Turnover | 2 | 36,448 | 43,470 |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Charitable Activities | 3 | 22,986 | 5,159 |
| Administration expenses | 4 | 956 | 751 |
| Net Income | | <u>12,506</u> | <u>37,560</u> |

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

Balance sheet As at 31st of January 2024

| | Notes | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Current assets | | | |
| Cash at bank and in hand: | | 75,538 | 82,948 |
| Prepaid expenses | | - | 443 |
| Debtors | 5 | 4,559 | - |
| Total current assets: | | 80,097 | 83,391 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 6 | (5,325) | (21,126) |
| Net current assets: | | 74,772 | 62,265 |
| Total assets less current liabilities: | | 74,772 | 62,265 |
| Total net assets: | | 74,772 | 62,265 |
| Representing: | | | |
| Accumulated Reserves at 1 st February 2023: | | 62,266 | 24,706 |
| Net Income for the year | | 12,506 | 37,560 |
| Accumulated Reserves at 31 st January 2024 | | 74,772 | 62,266 |

For the year ending 31 January 2024 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 3rd of November 2024 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 2024

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

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Conference fees | 24,574 | - |
| Grants and donations | - | 35,000 |
| Journal publisher royalties | 4,559 | - |
| Membership subscriptions | 7,031 | 8,319 |
| Special Interest Group meeting registration fees | 248 | 144 |
| Bank interest | 36 | 7 |
| | <u>36,448</u> | <u>43,470</u> |

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

3. Expenditure: Charitable Activities

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Conference expenses | 16,619 | - |
| Journal expenses | 1,511 | 930 |
| Journal publisher services | 3,825 | 3,060 |
| PayPal expenses | 307 | 812 |
| Bank charges | 31 | 25 |
| Website Informational Pages | <u>693</u> | <u>332</u> |
| | <u>22,986</u> | <u>5,159</u> |

4. Administrative Expenses

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Postage | 4 | - |
| Advertising & Promotions | 543 | 332 |
| Digital tools | 336 | 346 |
| Bank charges | 60 | 60 |
| Regulatory Fees | <u>13</u> | <u>13</u> |
| | <u>956</u> | <u>751</u> |

International Network for the Study of Spirituality (INSS)

5. Debtors

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| | £ | £ |
| Journal publisher royalties due | <u>4,559</u> | <u>-</u> |
| | <u>4,559</u> | <u>-</u> |

Note: This amount was received after the end of the reporting period.

6. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Deferred income from 2023 Conference | - | 21,126 |
| Journal editorial honorarium | 1,500 | - |
| Journal publisher services | <u>3,825</u> | <u>-</u> |
| | <u>5,325</u> | <u>21,126</u> |

Note: These 2024 amounts were paid after the end of the reporting period.

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 31st January 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

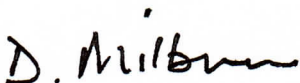
As the trustees of INSS you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (" the Act "). I report in respect of my examination of the INSS accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed 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: 

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: 4th November 2024