

**Press Release from the International Spiritualist Federation 16 July 2008**

***The failure of the ISF Executive to terminate Johnson's membership (after having allowed him to resign from office rather than permanently ending his role)***

The Executive Committee (EC) immediately suspended Mr Johnson as President following his arrest. With regard to the termination of his membership the issue was raised but no action was taken at the time as Mr Johnson had only been charged with an offence.

The issue was considered again when Mr Johnson was found guilty but at that stage there was appeal in process followed by a second appeal.

He was a life member of the ISF and under the Bye Laws of the organisation there are specific regulations to follow which include a right to arbitration and a right to address the members in Biannual General Meeting (BGM) in person or in writing.

When the criminal proceedings were concluded the EC decided in accordance with the Bye Laws to place the termination of membership before the members at the next BGM. As the ISF only holds a BGM every two years the first occasion this could be put to the members was in June 2008. Prior to the BGM the EC had already decided that Mr Johnson would no longer be able to hold any position of responsibility within the ISF organisation.

In the event in view of the motion put forward by the SNU and Mr Hopkins, it was unnecessary for the ISF to raise the issue yet again.

The motion to terminate Mr Johnson's membership was duly passed and ratified by the EC on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

The ISF wishes to make it absolutely clear "It unequivocally condemns abuse in any form".

***The manner in which a new president was chosen***

As a result of differences of opinion by members of the Executive Committee on the eligibility of Mr Willey to assume the role of President, legal advice was sought regarding the interpretation of the Bye-Laws. The ISF solicitor and an independent solicitor were consulted on the Bye-Laws. The ISF legal advisor's response was that Mr Willey was not eligible to take up the position of President as he had not served on the Executive Committee for two years as per Bye-Law C Administration 2 (b). The advice given by the ISF legal advisor was accepted by the majority of the Executive Committee and Garth Willey agreed, for the benefit of the organisation, to an election by ballot as per the Bye-Laws. Ann Luck was elected President by postal ballot of the membership.

***The decision of the Executive to hold its 2009 meeting in Sweden just miles from where Johnson carried out his crimes***

Sweden was being considered for the Fraternal week back in 2005 (Slovenia) and planning was started. The circumstances that arose were debated at length, with consideration and input from Swedish members, to determine if a different venue was more suitable and the decision was made to proceed as planned. A small handful of members have objected but it should be noted that the decision to hold its meeting in Sweden, made by the Executive Committee, was overwhelmingly approved by the ISF members at our Pow-Wow on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The venue Sättra Brunn is a 300 year-old spa at a sacred healing spring and well. The ISF is going there at the invitation of its Swedish members through its Swedish Liaison Officer. The ISF sees it has a duty to support it's members at this difficult time and to go there to show that it does not in any way support any form of abuse, nor does it support any misuse of Spiritual Healing and Mediumship gifts. The ISF in accordance with the Philosophy and principles of Spiritualism is currently receiving Spiritual Healing and is sending Spiritual Healing not only to all victims of abuse, but also to abusers.

***The manner in which the ISF has conducted its affairs with the SNU (including a challenge by its Executive to the appointment of the SNU representative***

The ISF Executive Committee respects and accepts the SNU's right to appoint whomever they wish as a delegate(s) to the ISF Congress. What may have been misconstrued as a challenge is the surprise by many that Mr Hopkins was chosen as the delegate. Mr Hopkins has not attended or been very active in ISF functions since the early 1990's and there are many regular attending members of ISF, who also are SNU members, who could have represented the SNU. More importantly at the AGM of the SNU held in July 2007 Mr Hopkins had urged the SNU to review it's affiliation with the ISF. This was reported to the ISF EC by SNU members who are also ISF members who were present at the SNU AGM.

***and the failure to place on its Biennial General Meeting a motion it had submitted)***

This is incorrect, The Biennial General Meeting Agenda as published in the "Yours Fraternally" magazine of April 2008 on page 8 had as item 13: Letter from the Spiritualists' National Union. The motions of Mr Hopkins submitted as an individual member were under item 11 on page 8 and listed on pages 12 & 13. The General Secretary also confirmed in writing they had been accepted and were on the agenda.

The motion was not only on the Agenda but put to the membership at the BGM and voted on and carried.

The EC understand that some confusion may have arisen because the SNU representative Mr Hopkins put the exactly the same motion to the meeting.

Mr Hopkins unfortunately did not have a seconder for his motion so at the suggestion of the President the SNU motion was put first so Mr Hopkins could be the seconder.

### ***The administration of the ISF and the running of its Biennial General Meeting***

Unfortunately due the numerous matters raised by the SNU representative the normal business of the BGM was unable to be concluded. A large number of the ISF members were distressed at the repeated attempts of Mr Hopkins to read from the transcript of Mr Johnson's trial to the membership, not least because the nature of the material. However, every courtesy was extended to the SNU representative Mr Hopkins by our President and other ISF members at the BGM. All the points raised by him were listened to and acted on accordingly.

### ***The procedures for nomination and appointment of officers and other executive roles***

The procedure as outlined in our Bye-Laws was followed. No correspondence or motions were received from any member nor from the SNU suggesting any changes be made to our procedures.

### ***The presentation of accounts and other issues***

The accounts were prepared by professional auditors and a full audit was carried out. The treasurer could not answer all the questions as he had only just received the latest set of accounts and the paperwork was still at the Auditors. The SNU representative Mr Hopkins was offered the telephone number so that he could ask them directly.

16 July 2008

Issued by the Executive Committee of the ISF.