

# **INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION**

**ARTICLES**

**AND**

**BYE-LAWS**

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# THE INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION

## ARTICLES AND BYE-LAWS

Effective 1 October 1994

The Articles and Bye-Laws which form the Constitution express the **AIMS** and **PRINCIPLES** of the Federation, and provide the necessary guidelines for those who carry out its duties.

The Aim of the Federation is “To reveal that Spiritual Nature of Mankind which harmonises with Natural Law”. This forms the basis of the Federation’s philosophy.

The **PRINCIPLES** express, in more detail, what we expect our members to hold as convictions if they are to support with sincerity the aims of the Federation. These consist essentially of the reality of a creative life force, the personal survival of bodily death, and of communion between this world and the next.

## ARTICLES

### 1. NAME

The name of the association shall be “The **International Spiritualist Federation**” (The Federation).

### 2. REGISTERED ADDRESS

The registered address for all official correspondence is:

A registered secure P. O. Box with mail direction to the current General Secretary. (P. O. Box address is in the front cover of the “*Yours Fraternally*” magazine).

### 3. OBJECTS

a) To promote the advancement, by educational means, and the diffusion throughout the world, of a knowledge of the science and philosophy of Spiritualism/Spiritism. Such philosophy shall be considered as recognising the following Principles:

- i) existence of a creative life force;
- ii) existence of a spiritual link between all forms of life;
- iii) survival of physical death by the individual spirit;
- iv) communication between individual human spirits and different levels of life.

And in these Articles, the words “Spiritualism” and “Spiritualist” shall be construed accordingly.

- b) To unite in federal union Spiritualist and related associations in all parts of the world and to offer individual membership of the Federation to Spiritualists, Spiritists, and others who accept the Federation’s written Constitution in its entirety;
- c) To provide machinery for the holding of General Meetings for delegates of member associations, societies, and individual members;
- d) To purchase, take on lease, hire, or otherwise acquire and also to let, lease, or dispose of any premises or other property for the purposes of the Federation;
- e) To undertake and execute any charitable trusts, the undertaking of which may be deemed desirable;
- f) To borrow from time to time, any monies required for the purposes of the Federation upon such security as may be determined;
- g) To co-operate with any other society or institution having objects similar to those of the Federation;
- h) To do all such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of any or all of the above objects.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

Categories of membership of the Federation shall be decided upon by members in General Meeting.

#### **5. ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICERS**

- a) Subject to the overall authority of the members, the administration of the Federation’s affairs shall be carried out by an Executive Committee (the Committee).
- b) The President, Vice-President, General Secretary, and Treasurer shall be deemed to be the Officers of the Federation.

#### **6. FINANCE**

The finances of the Federation shall be dealt with by the Treasurer under the direction of the Committee.

## **7. INDEMNIFICATION**

The Federation shall indemnify the Officers and members of the Committee and their heirs, executors, and administrators, in respect of all actions carried out in the name of the Federation which accord with the provisions of these Articles and Bye-Laws, except such as may be shown to be wilful or negligent.

## **8. BYE-LAWS**

- a) The Committee may make, amend, or repeal Bye-Laws;
- b) Any new Bye-Law or amendment to an existing Bye-Law shall cease to have effect unless ratified by members in general meeting at the General Meeting immediately subsequent to the making of such Bye-Law or amendment;
- c) The members in General Meeting shall have the right to make, amend, or repeal Bye-Laws;
- d) In the event of any conflict between the provisions of the Bye-Laws and the provisions of the Articles, the latter shall prevail.
- e) Bye-Laws may be repealed or amended by the Members in General Meeting by resolution, notice of which has been included in the circulated Agenda and passed by a simple majority of those present, entitled to vote, and voting.

## **9. WINDING UP OF THE FEDERATION**

The Federation may be wound up by resolution, notice of which has been included in the circulated Agenda of a General Meeting, passed by a two-thirds majority of those present, entitled to vote, and voting, provided that no such proposed resolution shall be considered unless it includes provision for the discharge of the liabilities and the disposal of the assets of the Federation. In the event that the Federation's funds are insufficient to discharge its liabilities, no member may be called upon to provide a sum in excess of one year's subscription (at a rate current at the time of the winding up) to meet such liabilities.

## **10. ALTERATION OF ARTICLES**

These Articles may be repealed or amended by the members in General Meeting by resolution, notice of which has been included in the circulated Agenda, passed by a two-thirds majority of those present, entitled to vote, and voting.

### **BYE-LAWS—"A"—MEMBERSHIP**

1. Membership of the Federation shall be open to groups and individuals, subject to the conditions stated below, and is granted only by the Committee ("groups" may include

societies, associations, groups, etc.). All members will be required to accept the Principles, Articles, and Bye-Laws of the Federation and, except for Honorary and Life members, to pay the annual subscription.

No group, church, or other type of organisation, being a member of any organisation or affiliated body already in membership of the Federation, shall be permitted to become members in their own right. Additionally, any group, church, or other type of organisation in membership of the Federation whose parent organisation or affiliated body subsequently is granted membership shall have their membership of the Federation terminated forthwith. It should be noted that nothing in this amendment shall preclude anyone from becoming an individual member if they are also members of organisations or affiliated bodies who are members of the Federation.

**2. Group membership shall be divided into the following categories:**

- a) **National Groups:** These are organisations which represent other Groups or Societies on a nation-wide basis. To qualify, such National Groups must, in the opinion of the Committee, represent other Groups or Societies on a nation-wide basis and have been in existence for at least five years at the date of application to the Federation and be financially sound in the opinion of the Committee. There shall be two categories of National Groups;
  - i) those with a minimum of 100 groups/societies in membership, and
  - ii) those with fewer than 100 groups/societies in membership;
- b) **Local Groups:** These are organisations which represent other Groups and Societies on a local or area basis only. To qualify, such Groups must, in the opinion of the Committee, represent Groups or Societies on a local or area basis and have been in existence for at least two years at the date of application to the Federation and be financially sound in the opinion of the Committee;
- c) **Independent Groups:** These are organisations whose membership consists solely of individuals. To qualify, such Groups must have at least fifty individual members and have been in existence for at least two years at the date of application to the Federation and be financially sound in the opinion of the Committee;
- d) **Associate Groups:** These are organisations of any type which have been in existence for less than two years. On the completion of the two year period such Groups shall be re-designated under a), b), or c) above, as appropriate. If they have less than fifty individual members they may remain as an Associate Group. (Associate Groups are not entitled to vote on any matter);

Groups defined in any of the above categories shall be referred to collectively as “affiliated bodies”;

- e) The Committee shall be empowered to accept into “Fraternal Association” with the Federation any organisation whose constitution does not enable it to meet all the detailed requirements for full membership of the Federation, but whose objectives are not in conflict with the purposes of the Federation. Such organisations shall not have voting rights.
3. Honorary Vice-Presidency or Honorary Membership may be granted by the Committee to any person in recognition of outstanding work done for the Federation, or for the cause of Spiritualism.
  4. The Committee shall, in its absolute discretion, have the power to accept, defer, or reject any application.
  5. **Membership Termination Due to Non-payment of Subscription**
    - a) The membership of any individual member whose subscription is more than three months in arrears shall be automatically terminated provided the Committee are satisfied due notice has been given;
    - b) The Committee shall have the power to terminate the membership of any affiliated body for non-payment of subscriptions after due notice has been given.
  6. The Committee shall have the power to terminate the membership of any individual, honorary member, or affiliated body, for reasons other than non-payment of subscriptions provided that:
    - a) notice of the proposal to terminate membership has been included on the agenda of the Committee meeting;
    - b) the member has been informed of such notice at least 28 days prior to such a meeting;
    - c) the member shall have the right to appear in person or send a representative, or make written submission to the Committee;

Any member whose membership is terminated other than for arrears of subscription shall have the right to submit the case to an Arbitration Panel made up of a nominee of the Committee, a nominee of the member, and a Chairman mutually agreed to by both parties. The decision of the panel shall be final and binding on both parties and there shall be no further appeal.

Should a member choose not to submit to arbitration he/she may appear in person before, or send a representative, or make written submission to the members in General Meeting subsequent to the meeting of the Committee at which such termination was agreed. The decision of the members in this General Meeting shall be final and binding on both parties and there shall be no further appeal.

**7. Affiliated Body Entitlements**

- a) All affiliated bodies shall be entitled to place on correspondence, advertising etc, the following words: “affiliated to The International Spiritualist Federation”.
  - b) All affiliated bodies shall receive regularly and on request a full list of all groups affiliated to the Federation.
- 8.** Subscriptions for Individual Members shall be decided from time to time by members in General Meeting. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee shall have the discretion to vary the subscription payable.
- 9.** Group subscriptions shall be fixed by the Committee to reflect any changes in subscriptions for Individual Members in the light of prevailing circumstances for the Federation and particular Groups.
- 10.** Notwithstanding para 8 above, Honorary members shall be entitled to all rights and benefits of individual membership without being liable to pay any subscription.
- 11.** Any individual member may convert his/her membership to, or may apply for, permanent life membership on payment of a sum equivalent to ten times the annual subscription in force at the time of such payment, provided he/she has reached the age of 55 years at the time of application.
- 12.** Any individual member may purchase a five year membership for the cost of four years membership.

**BYE-LAWS-“B”-GENERAL MEETINGS**

- 1.** The Federation shall hold Biennial General Meetings for all members and delegates of associated bodies or Extraordinary General Meetings at such other times and dates as the members in general meeting or the Executive Committee may decide.
- 2.** The Committee shall be responsible for the date and venue of Biennial and Extraordinary General meetings, but shall take into account the views of members in General Meeting.  
  
Furthermore, the Committee shall have absolute discretion to employ the postal voting machinery contained in Bye-Law “B”, clause 11i).
- 3.** The business of General Meetings shall be conducted under the standing orders in force at the time. The Committee shall create the standing orders for General Meetings. The Committee shall review the standing orders on a regular basis and make appropriate changes.
- 4.** The agenda for any General Meeting shall be prepared by the General Secretary and



forwarded to each affiliated body not less than two months prior to the date of such meeting. The agenda shall also be forwarded to all individual and honorary members and to all members of the Committee.

5. Statements of the Accounts and Reports by the Committee, and any sub-committee set up, or any individual appointed, shall be submitted and considered by the members in General Meeting.
6. All business shall be transacted as laid down on the agenda.
7. Any affiliated body, individual or honorary member may submit a motion which shall be placed on the agenda:
  - a) if it is received by the General Secretary, in writing, not less than five months before the date of the meeting, and,
  - b) unless the contents are considered by the committee (or any sub-committee set up to deal with General Meetings) to be defamatory, frivolous, or outside the aims and objects of the Federation.
8. The language used at General Meetings shall be English unless otherwise decided by members in General Meeting.

9. The quorum shall be 20.

## 10. DELEGATES

- a) National Groups shall be entitled to three delegates;
- b) Local and Independent Groups shall each be entitled to one delegate.

## 11. VOTING

- a) National Groups:
  - i) National Groups having more than 100 groups/societies in membership shall be entitled to ten votes;
  - ii) National Groups having fewer than 100 groups/societies in membership shall be entitled to five votes;
- b) Local and Independent Groups shall be entitled to three votes;  
(Associate Groups are not entitled to vote on any matter)
- c) Individual and honorary members shall be entitled to one vote;

- d) Voting in elections for the Executive Committee shall be by ballot;
  - e) Voting on all other issues shall be by show of hands unless otherwise decided by the Chairman or if demanded by not less than ten members and/or .delegates (in a show of hands each person eligible to vote shall have one vote);
  - f) The Chairman shall be entitled to a casting vote;
  - g) The declaration by the Chairman of a result shall be binding unless challenged immediately by 10 members and/or delegates in which case a ballot or second ballot shall be held;
  - h) Any affiliated body or individual member may appoint a proxy (who must be a member of an affiliated body or a member in his/her own right) to speak and vote on their behalf. Proxies must be notified to the General Secretary on the official form provided and by the date indicated on the same form. No person shall act as proxy for more than one affiliated body or for more than four individual members;
  - i) Any affiliated body or individual member may exercise their right to a postal vote on any matter included on the agenda for any General Meeting as being a matter to be decided by ballot. Such postal votes must be in the hands of the Elective Auditors at least 21 days prior to the General Meeting in question. The result of any postal vote shall be verified to the General Secretary by the Elective Auditors;
  - j) Two Elective Auditors shall be elected by members at the Biennial General Meeting. The duties of Elective Auditors shall be to receive nominations and votes cast in ballots and pass a summary of nominations received and the results of ballots to the General Secretary. Additional duties, such as checking stock, may be allocated to Elective Auditors by the members in General Meeting or, subject to ratification by the subsequent General Meeting, additionally by the Committee;
  - k) No delegate or proxy shall speak or vote unless the subscriptions of the Affiliated Body or Individual Member for whom they are acting have been paid up to date; individual members shall not be permitted to speak or vote as proxies unless their own subscriptions have been paid up to date. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chairman or the Committee may grant special permission to a member, delegate, or proxy to speak.
- 12.** Visitors shall be entitled to attend General Meetings (unless otherwise decided by the Committee and/or the Chairman) but shall not be entitled to vote. The Chairman may, at his/her absolute discretion, allow a visitor to speak.
- 13.** The Committee shall make every possible endeavour to ensure that a programme of study, social events, and other activities is arranged ancillary to the General Meeting.
- 14.** Members of the Federation shall have the right to table questions to the Committee as a

whole or to individual members of the Committee for a response at the Biennial General Meeting, provided such questions are received by the General Secretary in writing, within a specific period prior to the General Meeting, which period shall be specified by the Committee.

## **BYE-LAWS-“C”-ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. Constitution of Executive Committee.**

The Committee shall comprise:

- a) A President, a Vice-President, and two members elected by the members;
- b) An Individual Members’ Representative, elected solely by the Individual Members;
- c) A General Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be appointed by the Committee at the next Committee meeting after the Biennial General Meeting from nominations made by members. Additional nominations other than those submitted per Clause 2d), are acceptable prior to the next meeting of the Committee providing the nominated individual has been a member per Clause 2c). Such appointed positions shall have full voting rights.

### **2. Election and Appointment of Officers and Committee**

- a) In order to be elected or appointed to any position in the Organisation of the ISF, an eligible individual will be required to sign current Confidentiality Statement to protect personal member information in accordance with the Data Privacy Act(s) currently in effect.
- b) To be eligible for nomination for election, candidates must have been individual members for a period of at least two years immediately prior to the Biennial General Meeting at which the elections are due to take place. The candidates must also be nominated by at least one Affiliated Body or two Individual Members;
- c) In addition to meeting the requirements of clause 2a) above, candidates for office of President or Vice-President must have served on the Committee for at least two years immediately prior to the Biennial General Meeting at which the elections are due to take place and maintained continuous individual membership of the ISF for at least 4 years immediately prior to that Biennial General Meeting.
- d) To be eligible for nomination for appointment as General Secretary or Treasurer, the candidate must have been an Individual Member for a period of at least two years immediately prior to the Committee meeting at which the appointment is

due to be made;

- e) Nominations must reach the Elective Auditors at least two calendar months prior to the Biennial General Meeting at which the elections and appointments are due to take place;
- f) Elections shall be for two electoral periods but the election of the President and Vice-President shall be so arranged that the termination of their periods of office does not coincide;
- g) Casual vacancies which may be filled by co-option by the Committee, to vacant places on the Executive Committee (in the period between Biennial General Meetings) can only apply to those of appointed officers. Vacancies caused by the departure of elected committee members, (excluding President or Vice-President), must be filled by those candidates with the next highest votes at the last Biennial General meeting until the following one, when they must stand again in accordance with the Bye-Laws; those co-opted in this way shall serve until the subsequent Biennial General Meeting.

If a duly Elected Committee member fills a vacancy of an appointed position on the Committee they do not lose their tenure period as elected by the membership. Any member subsequently co-opted onto the Committee shall serve until the subsequent Biennial General Meeting where they may stand again in accordance with the Bye-Laws.

In the case of the resignation or death of the President, the Vice-President shall automatically succeed to the Presidency to serve until the subsequent Biennial General Meeting. Should the Vice-President be unable or unwilling to assume the Presidency, the officers shall arrange a postal ballot for the election of a new President within 60 days. The person elected in such a ballot shall serve the remaining term of the deceased or resigned President following which the normal procedure for electing a President will be resumed. In the case of the death or resignation of the Vice-President, the Committee shall appoint one of its number who meets all the constitutional requirements to that office to serve until the subsequent Biennial General Meeting;

- h) Appointments shall be for one electoral period;
- i) Committee members and holders of any office or appointment shall be eligible for re-nomination.

### **3. Meetings of the Committee**

- a) The Committee shall meet annually and at such other times as may be considered appropriate. All meetings shall normally be convened by the General Secretary.

- b) The quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be five, including at least two Officers.
- c) The use of proxies at the meetings of the Executive Committee is permitted, provided the quorum is met.

#### 4. Duties of Officers and Committees

- a) *The President shall:* preside at all meetings of the Committee and at all General Meetings; direct the carrying out of decisions of meetings; consult with members of the Committee on all matters of principle or importance, except in cases of emergencies. Should neither the President nor the Vice-President be present to preside, another officer or, failing that, a member of the quorum should be chosen to preside;
- b) *The Vice-President shall:* act for the President when the latter is not available and perform other duties as may be allocated by the President or Committee; take and maintain proper minutes of all Executive Committee and General Meetings of the Federation under the guidance of the General Secretary, ensure all minutes are circulated to those entitled to receive them within a reasonable period of the respective meetings concluding, and perform any other administrative and secretarial duties to assist the General Secretary.
- c) *The General Secretary shall:* keep accurate records of all meetings; keep a register of members; conduct correspondence and maintain regular contact with all affiliated bodies; perform the usual secretarial duties; present a report of the activities of the Federation at each Committee Meeting and General Meeting and circulate an interim report to all members during those years in which a Biennial General Meeting is not held.
- d) *The Treasurer shall:* keep proper books of account; render full details at each meeting of the Committee and at each General Meeting; be responsible for the established bank account(s) of the Federation; be responsible for making recommendations to the Committee for investment and general financial policy.
- e) *The Individual Members' Representative shall:* in addition to other duties, keep a register of members, arrange for it to be updated and sent periodically to the General Secretary, Treasurer, and Bulletin/Journal Editor(s); be responsible for the collection of all subscriptions, issuing of receipts under his/her signature, reminders, and all allied matters; arrange with the Treasurer for the banking of all subscriptions; keep the Officers informed on a regular basis of all matters relating to membership.
- f) The Committee shall have the power:
  - i) to set up and disband committees created for specific purposes and

- ii) to appoint and dismiss individuals chosen to carry out specific duties;
- g) The Committee shall prescribe the duties of the committees it sets up and individuals it appoints for specific purposes;
- h) The day to day operation of the Federation shall be the responsibility of the Officers under the supervision of the President;

### **BYE-LAWS–“D”–FINANCE**

1. All monies except membership subscriptions shall be paid to the Treasurer, who shall issue receipts, bank monies, etc.
2. All membership subscriptions shall be paid to the Individual Members’ Representative who shall issue receipts under his/her own signature, bank monies, etc., and furnish the Treasurer with full and regular details.
3. The Committee (or the Officers in special circumstances) may empower one or more of its number to deal with monies for specific purposes. Any person(s) so appointed shall, within a suitable period, present a full statement of accounts to the Treasurer.
4. All cheques shall be drawn on such bank account as shall be agreed by the Committee on the recommendation of the Treasurer and shall be signed by at least two of the agreed signatories appointed by the Committee.
5. A registered Auditor or Accountant shall be appointed by the members in General Meeting, to act and conduct an Independent Examination of the accounts and provide a report for the electoral period.
6. The accounts of the Federation shall be examined annually by the Auditor or the Accountant and shall be presented annually to the Committee. A summary of the accounts shall be submitted to the members at each General Meeting.
7. The Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Expenditure shall be published annually in the Federation’s magazine/bulletin. The documents are to be published in the edition of the magazine/bulletin next following them becoming available from the Federation’s auditors, even where that means that in a Biennial General Meeting year, they are published in the magazine/bulletin after that meeting has taken place. Copies of these documents shall be distributed to all members and delegates attending the Biennial General Meeting, whether or not they have been previously published.

**Approved at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Congress, Shanklyn, Isle of Wight, UK;  
And amended at the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, & 32<sup>nd</sup> World Congresses 2012 held**

**in Eastbourne, UK; the 35<sup>th</sup> World Congress 2018 held in Stony Point, New York, USA; & the 37<sup>th</sup> World Congress 2022 held on the Zoom Video Teleconference Platform.**