



ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

A South African School Making a World of Difference

14 August 2015

Dear Saints family

As we draw the curtain on the second term of 2015, I express thanks to each one of our students, teachers, parents and Council members for your contribution to our vibrant school community. From the Rector's vantage point, I am conscious on a daily basis of the wellspring of energy, goodwill and commitment that makes St Stithians a school of dreams, a valley of hope. As a professional learning organisation, we seek to inspire excellence and make a world of difference. We are an aspirational community where we seek to model processes of learning that involve enquiry, articulation, assessment and reflection. We promote the formulation of good questions and a problem-solving mind set.

In the letter which follows, I address the following points:

- Growing our online presence
- Leading Educational Design: International Confederation of Principals conference in Finland
- Rector Connect, 10 September 2015: 18h00 One & All conference room
- Term 3 calendar now on website
- Junior Prep Gateway and Nolte cycads
- St Stithians security tender outcome
- Team Thandulwazi taking on the 947 Momentum Cycle Challenge
- Secretaries and receptionists training day, 3 September – closing of offices

Growing our online presence

The launch of our new website www.stithian.com and the appointment of Lethabo-Thabo Royds as our Communications Co-ordinator during July reflect our intent to refresh and improve our online presence and grow a networked community. Our Founders' Day theme of 'telling our stories' is a special focus of 2015, as we get better at communicating the many wonderful and outstanding features of daily life at Saints.

Please follow @ststithians on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ststithians>) and like the St Stithians College Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/ststithians>). Our goal is to have many more staff, parents, students and alumni connected to these media platforms.

Leading Educational Design: International Confederation of Principals conference in Finland

I was privileged to attend this conference last week in Helsinki. Given the prominence of the Finnish education system as one of the world's leading examples of best practice, it was fascinating and inspiring to participate in a professional conversation with leaders from around the world. I also visited three schools.

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Leading Educational Design was the main theme of the conference and I have come away with a number of 'design' thoughts that I will draw on as we implement *Strategy 2025* and continually strive to improve our educational offering. At the start of next term, I will post a longer report on the Finnish experience.

Both Finland and South Africa are, in recent decades, relatively young 'new nations'. The nature of each society is quite different, but have a similar preoccupation with a heavy investment in education. The educational outcomes in Finland have been highly positive, while in South Africa education remains a system in crisis, with pockets of excellence. There are aspects of the macro Finish system which can be applied to centres of excellence in South Africa. At a broader level, the extent of social inequalities in South Africa and the deficits in the professional expertise of very large numbers of South African teachers, are major differentiators with Finland.

In Finland, admission to teacher education degrees is highly selective, and teachers are expected to graduate with a Masters degree. In Grade 10, 40%-50% of students choose the vocational curriculum, which has equal status to the academic curriculum, and both are valid routes to entry into tertiary study.

Rector Connect, 10 September 2015: 18h00 One & All conference room

I remind you of my next Rector Connect gathering which provides an opportunity for me to interact with parents and staff on Strategy 2025, Budget 2016, our Umalusi accreditation process and other topics of College-wide interest.

Term 3 calendar now on website

Please find the Term 3 calendar at <http://www.stithian.com/content/page/campus-calendars>. I express appreciation to the team of people who put together the very active and complex programme of events for all our schools. It is a major timetabling matrix.

Junior Prep Gateway and Nolte cycads

The landscape design of the new entrance and quad of the JP is nearing completion. It is hard to believe that a road once ran through this space. The gateway is host to a generous gift of cycads from the Nolte family, creating a striking atmosphere in this place of arrival, the beginning of the thirteen-year Saints journey. We express our thanks to our Chair of Council, Carel Nolte, for initiating this lasting legacy for our campus; and to Pauline Dickson and the professional team who moved and replanted the cycads.

St Stithians security tender outcome

Over recent months, a representative tender committee has been processing the tender for campus security. Applying the College's procurement policy, as well as following a thorough process of due diligence, the tender contract has been awarded to Special Ops 99. As from 1 September 2015, the new security company will be managing our entrances, performing patrols, monitoring cameras and alarms, and assisting with event management. The awarding of the tender has provided an opportunity to review current practices, and to look at ways to improve the levels of security around the campus.

We thank 24/7 Security Services for their contributions to campus security for the past six years. We have been assured that the existing guards have been assigned new contracts.

Team Thandulwazi taking on the 947 Momentum Cycle Challenge

Last year's Team Thandulwazi inaugural ride of the 947 was pleasingly successful as a fundraiser and community-builder. Some 45 cyclists took part. We are aiming to have 100 team members this year, and still have some way to go to meet this target. The Rector and the Chair of Council will be at the start line. The deadline for registering with Team Thandulwazi is 27 August, so please spread the news, sign up and find the details at: <http://www.stithian.com/news/entry/ride-for-a-purpose-ride-for-thandulwazi>

Secretaries and receptionists training day, 3 September – closing of offices

All of our secretaries and 'front of house' administrators will be attending a day of training and development on Thursday 3 September. The reception at the Rector's Office and Girls' College will be open until 13:00.

In conclusion

May the holiday period provide regeneration and opportunities for family time. For those travelling, may you do so safely.

Good wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Nuttall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Dr T A Nuttall
Rector