



ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

A South African School Making a World of Difference

5 February 2015

Dear Parents

I open this letter with a reminder of my invitation to you to join me at the Rector Connect gathering at the One & All Club on Monday 9 February at 18:00.

The commencement ceremonies of 2015 are now behind us; our new students have rung the bell and participated in other rites of passage as they begin new phases in their lives. On Thursday last week the Girls' schools celebrated the start of their 20th birthday year in a memorable ceremony in the new Anne van Zyl amphitheatre. Term 1 is in top gear, and I sense a good start to the year in many different ways.

I express appreciation to our parents for your investment in your child's education at St Stithians, and for your involvement in our school community. My worldview as Rector is shaped very much by the importance of partnership between the school and our families.

Statement on Spirituality

At the Start of Year chapel service, with the whole staff present, I officially launched our Statement of Spirituality. This important document was crafted during 2014 in the Council's Church Committee, whose membership consists of representatives of the Methodist Church, the Council and parents, as well as the chaplains, the Heads of School and the Rector. Reverend Dan Nkomo, our superintendent chaplain, will oversee a year-long engagement with the Statement in our chapel services, religious education classes and community activities. We will also be profiling the Statement in our school newsletters and other media.

The Statement on Spirituality is an important document in defining our College's Christian and Methodist ethos, and it can be found on our website's Rector Page at the following link: http://www.stithian.com/images/pdfs/rector_documents/Spirituality%20Statement%20St%20Stithians%20College.pdf.

The Statement affirms the Methodist origins of our founding, the institutional relationship with the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and the roles of our chaplains who are stationed at the school. The document outlines the spiritual aims of St Stithians, the sanctity of our chapel, and the expected participation and contribution of our staff and students. The Statement addresses our intent to offer religious education in the curriculum. Having outlined and endorsed our Christian identity, the Statement expresses welcome and respect for staff and students who are believers of other faiths, recognising the cultural diversity of our school and our society.

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I quote the Conclusion of the Statement on Spirituality, which reads as follows:

The overall purpose of our Christian spirituality at St Stithians College is to tell the good news of God's love for humanity and our world. As we do so, we provide opportunities for one and all to commit ourselves to Jesus Christ as Saviour in our lives so that we may walk humbly with our God.

'Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind". This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself".' (Matthew 22: 37-39)

Honour God. Honour Others. Honour Self.
Thanks be to God.

Kamoka Bush School – new leadership

I am pleased to write about the appointment of Steve Baytopp as our new Director of Kamoka and Kerry Baytopp as our new Deputy Director. Steven and Kerry assume this role after a remarkable joint career as husband and wife, spanning some 30 years in outdoor and 'bush' education – in South Africa and Botswana.

The Baytopps are particularly well suited to take Kamoka Bush School into a new phase of its existence, building on the founding platform created by Kate and Mike Doyle. We are pleased and privileged to count Kamoka as our 6th school, located on a game farm outside Modimolle. I invite you to read up more about Kamoka on our website at the following link: <http://www.stithian.com/index.php/kamoka-bush-school#general-information>

Strategy 2025

Work is progressing in the College Exco and in Council committees as we prepare a new 10-year Strategy for St Stithians College. Towards the end of last year, and during the first term of this year, I am taking every available opportunity to present the evolving thinking to members of the College community. I have interacted with the whole staff, with the Matric students, with some of the PTA committees (and forthcoming meetings are calendarised) and, where possible, with wider groupings of parents. I will be addressing Strategy 2025 in my Rector Connect gathering this coming Monday evening.

As we prepare to inspire excellence and make a world of difference over the next ten years, we are reviewing our Statement of Intent and our Statement of Purpose. Consensus and clarity on these foundational texts is vital as we create a vision and a plan for the future of St Stithians. The emerging themes of this plan are: School Character, Synergy Projects, People and Talent, Community Engagement, Institutional Advancement and Facilities 2030.

Strategy 2025 gives us an opportunity to review and refresh our priorities and purposes as a centre of educational excellence. We appreciate our past and our present; we embrace our future. We are engaged in a master plan review of the campus and its facilities. The introduction of the capital development levy as a component of our annual fees is intended to improve our provision to build new facilities and upgrade existing ones, alongside our intention to diversify our income through donations, sponsorship and innovative fundraising. The establishment of the Advancement Office is expressly aimed at addressing this diversification.

The St Stithians Council is meeting for a special strategy session during the first week of March, after which *Strategy 2025* will be fleshed out.

Three Pavilions, Thandulwazi Academy and the Saints Endowment Fund

As part of our annual capital expenditure, we are launching the Three Pavilions Project, seeking to build three pavilions during 2015 and 2016. Each of these will provide much needed social gathering spaces, ablution facilities, and sports viewing opportunities.

The First Pavilion is planned to be built next to the High Performance Centre. It will be a double-storey structure. The second storey will be level with Jamieson field and will enable viewing of sport on both the Main Oval and Baytopp fields. The ground level will consist of sports offices and changing rooms. The projected cost is R10,5m. Half of this amount is included in the 2015 capex budget, and we seek to raise the other half through donations or sponsorship.

The Second Pavilion is planned to be built during 2016 at the Girls' netball and tennis courts. The project brief is being drawn up at present, so there are not yet detailed drawings and costings. The present concept is to build a double-storey pavilion with a social gathering and viewing space on the second-storey, with changing rooms at the ground level. The Girls' Pavilion is intended as a 21st Birthday project and the funding will be on a 50:50 basis between the school and donors or sponsors.

The Third Pavilion, a project which may occur this year or next year, involves a rebuild of the current conference room at the Higher Ground and will be funded on a 50:50 basis, as outlined above.

The Thandulwazi Academy requires some R8m annually in funding, which is sourced through CSI spending and private donations. The St Stithians Foundation and St Stithians College is proud of our achievement in the creation of Thandulwazi, and with the arrival this week of Dr Themba Mthethwa as our new Director of Academy we are well set to take the Academy into the future.

The long term sustainability of St Stithians will be enhanced by us building up an endowment fund, a secure capital fund. We have started on this process, but have a long way to go. The current fund of R10m is small relative to the stature of St Stithians. To keep up momentum, we have set ourselves a target of raising R2,5m for the endowment fund in 2015.

The College Exco, the Foundation governors, the College Council, and the Old Stithian Association are working together to advance the projects outlined above. I invite anyone who is interested in participating and contributing to contact me in the Rector's Office (rector@stithian.com), Carel Nolte our Council Chair (carel@carelnolte.com), Bev Johnson in the Advancement Office (foundation@stithian.com) or Shaun Edmeston our OSA Chair (shaun@youcalled.co.za).

Yours sincerely



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