

Flower Power - 3000 Bulbs Planted at Stanford's Entrance

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

STANFORD CONSERVATION













On May 1st, Workers' Day acquired a whole new meaning when it took exactly one hour to plant over 3 000 yellow chasmanthe bulbs in the gardens next to the entrance to Stanford and within the R43 circle.

Fifty residents responded to the appeal and arrived with forks, spades, trowels and considerable enthusiasm to help establish a future Stanford-in-Winter-bloom experience.

Many new friends were made, and many faces were put to names previously known only through social media groups. Passing vehicles' encouragement enhanced the morning's endorphin boost.

The bulbs were donated by Francois and Annette Prins who sold their flower farms on the Papiesvlei road and are soon-to-be Stanford residents.

All the gardens at the circle were developed and are made maintained by Stanford Conservation – more about this on page 7.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Stanford Conservation Trust remains steadfast in its mission to protect our village's natural beauty, enhance community spaces, and improve quality of life for all residents. Through the dedication of volunteers, the generosity of donors and the support of our members, we continue to deliver meaningful environmental and conservation successes year after year.

Challenges persist, particularly around sustainable funding and wider community participation, yet these only strengthen our resolve. Your ongoing involvement and membership are essential to overcoming these hurdles and securing a greener, cleaner Stanford for the future.

Looking ahead, we are actively engaging with the Chairs Forum to advance key initiatives such as the Special Rating Area, the Stanford East Spatial Development Plan and building a unified long-term vision for our village.

We value every contribution and look forward to welcoming you at our **Annual General Meeting on 3 June 2026 at the St Thomas Oulap Hall. 17:30 for 18:00. Membership fee: R400/year**
Please pay at the door (preferably cash, or card) if you have not yet paid.

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL EXPENSES (rounded)

PROJECT	RAND
Swop Shop	70 000
Wandelpad	61 000
Equipment:	10 000
R43 gardens	10 000
Historical	5 000
Storage rental	11 000
Insurance,	13 000
TOTAL	**180 000**



Our income from membership is only R60 000 – which means only 150 households are members and contribute to the environmental well-being of the village. **PLEASE consider becoming a member and help us improve your village. It only costs R400/year - less than one cup of coffee/month!**



John Kelley
Chairperson

A FINANCIAL THOUGHT OR TWO..

In preparation for the **AGM on 3 June 2026**, the Stanford Conservation committee once again was struck by how much this organisation contributes to safeguard one of the biggest investments of your lifetime: the property you own. Keeping Stanford beautiful, clean and green does not just 'happen' – it takes an organisation, its members and its volunteers to make it happen. Thanks to members' financial support and fundraising initiatives, Stanford has become a sought-after rural spot in the Western Cape.

Many residents question how municipalities spend rates and taxes, often not realizing their main responsibility is to deliver essential community services, including:

- Water and sanitation
- Roads
- Electricity

As populations grow, municipalities are increasingly under pressure to meet rising service demands, often having to cut down on less essential ones. resulting in the reduction of 'nice-to-have' services. Globally, citizens are taking a greater role, and the same approach should be encouraged within Stanford.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Start small: cut the grass on your pavement, join the groups who maintain our historical graveyards, playgrounds and Wandelpad, remove invasive plants in your garden and donate generously to your local environmental group. Municipal issues are best reported directly on the Collaborator App; not on social media.

Stanford Conservation spends around R270 000 annually to improve local living. Projects include:

- the 4.7km Wandelpad,
- public spaces like the riverfront, playgrounds, historical graveyards,
- invasive vegetation removal,
- gardens in and around the R43 circle, and
- purchases for the Swop Shop, which collects 20 tonnes of recyclables annually that would otherwise go to landfill.

JOIN THE CAUSE

Currently, Stanford Conservation only has ±150 members who each contribute R400 per year, amounting to R60,000. The deficit is covered through various fundraising efforts and donor support.

According to the municipality, there are 69 businesses, 673 residences and 194 vacant properties that have the means to support community efforts, yet only 15% participate. Image how much more could do be done if more residents joined Stanford Conservation!

Would you consider encouraging your friends, neighbours, fellow Wandelpad users, or card game partners to become members? One cup of coffee costs R35. One cup a month equals R420. Our annual membership is only R400.



NOT SO INNOCENT: THE "BABIES" TAKING OVER STANFORD

The central theme of this newsletter is the role Stanford Conservation plays in enhancing the quality of life for the Stanford community through environmental improvement. One persistent challenge is the proliferation of invasive vegetation within both private gardens and public open spaces.



This edition highlights three invasive tree species present in Stanford that are predominantly spread by the local seed-eating bird population. Birds consume the fruits of these trees and subsequently disperse viable seeds when perching on fences, walls, utility wires, chimneys, or in other trees. This results in a considerable number of new saplings emerging among garden plants, in nearby verges or in neighbouring gardens, often only becoming noticeable once they surpass surrounding shrubs.

South Africa's biodiversity act prohibits residents from facilitating the spread of invasive species in their gardens. It is even more important to prevent new growth in riparian zones, such as Stanford. Because it's impossible to control birds, it's important to clear any seeds that drop on the ground, regularly check for and quickly remove new saplings from gardens and nearby street verges, and help neighbours if an invasive tree in your garden is spreading seeds.



Invasive trees are categorised by the National Environmental Management and Biodiversity Act (NEMBA). The Guava is a declared Category 2 invader and may only be grown in controlled areas – and not in your garden! Although both Syringa and Brazilian Pepper are classified as Category 3 invaders, Stanford's riparian setting intensifies their impact. For example, the Syringa is designated as a Category 1b invader on all properties within the 1:100-year flood line.

HOW TO REMOVE THESE TREES

Small trees:

Use a tree popper (Stanford Conservation will assist) or cut saplings off low down and paint the freshly cut stump to prevent regrowth / coppicing with an appropriate herbicide, ensuring that instructions on the label are followed for your own safety.

Large trees:

Consider approaching an arborist to remove the tree and apply herbicide to the remaining stump. You can also apply the herbicide, using diesel as a carrier, in a ring around the base of the tree trunk to a height of 30cm, but you will still have to remove the dead tree at a later stage.

BRAZILIAN PEPPER (Schinus terebinthifolius)



The Brazilian Pepper tree poses a significant threat, especially in coastal regions, estuaries, wetlands and disturbed areas. It establishes dense monocultures that outcompete and displace native vegetation, significantly diminishing biodiversity and altering natural ecosystems.

Its high fruit yield, combined with the attractiveness of its berries to birds such as starlings and bulbuls, results in extensive seed dispersal. In addition to seed spread, the species propagates via root suckering, and its invasive roots are capable of damaging water pipes.

The Brazilian Pepper tree contains toxic compounds, rendering its leaves, sap, and berries hazardous to humans, pets (particularly dogs) and wildlife.

SYRINGA (Melia azedarach)



Syringa trees are a huge threat to Stanford. Despite its fragrant lilac flowers (loved by some and hated by others who suffers from sinusitis) it spreads rapidly via bird-dispersed seeds and crowd out native plants, especially near riverbanks, forests, and wetlands like the Mill Stream. While usually Category 3, they are classified as Category 1b within the 1:100-year flood line and wetland areas.

The seeds are toxic to people and animals (particularly children and dogs) so check your garden and surroundings and safely dispose of any berries.

An explanation and complete list of all invasive species can be found on https://invasives.org.za/wp-content/uploads/invasive_alien_plants_in_south_africa.pdf.

GUAVA (Psidium guajava)



Loved by many, the guava is unfortunately a major invasive species in South Africa, especially in riparian areas, as its seeds are widely spread by birds and animals, forming dense thickets that out-compete indigenous plants. In Stanford the situation is exacerbated by the children who love to pick the fruit, take a bite or two and toss them in the street or (even worse) in the stormwater/ leiwater channels.

In Stanford, the issue is compounded by children who frequently pick fruit, take a few bites, and toss them in the street or, more concerningly, in stormwater and leiwater channels. Please remove from your garden, if possible, and remove all saplings.

How Stanford Chose Nature Over Concrete

The circle and the gardens next to the R43 / R326 intersection is every traveller's first impression of Stanford. Often it will entice the accidental traveller to explore what lies beyond, bringing much-needed economic benefits to the village.

DID YOU KNOW
If the Western Cape Roads Department had its way, the circle, sidewalks and approaching traffic islands would be paved in 'no maintenance' grey pavers without a trace of greenery.

During the public participation process, Stanford Conservation refused to accept this urban approach for a rural village. After many negotiations, the Roads Department agreed to change the design to that proposed – but on the condition that the organisation takes responsibility for planting and maintaining the green areas. They did agree to put in a sleeve under the tarmac so that the circle could be irrigated with water from the Agri side.

MAINTENANCE
Planting and maintenance (and irrigation woes) are ongoing, but after two years of perseverance and lots of help from residents, we are getting there. As the area is not municipal property, we get no municipal assistance apart from taking away the bags after the beds have been weeded. They have also agreed to soon install two water points on Daneel Street.





We are grateful to **Riverlands Nursery** for improving the verge next to the Agri, and to **Ron Joubert** for taking two of the seven garden areas at the entrance under his wing. The other areas are maintained under Conservation's Wandelpad mandate, with drought-resistant plants kindly donated by residents. The **OK** has also come to the party by improving the garden opposite the fuel forecourt, including painting the rubbish bins!



The litter at the two taxi stopping areas is still a problem, and we do hope some Stanford business or organisation will step up to clean the areas at least once a week. Again, because it is on provincial land, the muni will not become involved.

THE 7TH GARDEN AREA
With the onset of rain, we've begun planting our seventh garden near the taxi rank. Drought-resistant plants are chosen due to challenging soil conditions, and each gets compost and bonemeal for growth. As winter approaches, we'll plant more agapanthus and gazanias, depending on donations.

LEGACY OF GIVING: TWO STANFORD CONSERVATION MEMBERS TAKE A BOW

It takes a special type of person to serve a community as a volunteer. There are no rah-rah accolades and whistling bells to tell the community how much time and energy you spend 'behind the scenes' to improve the livelihood and well-being of your fellow citizen. Most residents just see things 'happen', without giving a though on how it happens, or who drives it.

This year Stanford Conservation salutes two of its members who decided to hang up their boots after decades of voluntary service. We wish you both many more years of good health – and enjoy the "me-time"!



Denise and Stuart Anderson became part of Stanford village life in January 2009. On Mandela Day 2014, she joined a group to provide soup and fruit to the residents at Die Kop. There she met Elma Hunter, the 'mother' of the Swop Shop – and the rest is history! At that stage, clothes donated by residents were traded via a coupon system to those who brought recyclable materials. When this became too cumbersome, the municipality provided space at Die Stoor.

In 2015 the Swop Shop was donated a container that became their much-needed storeroom. With extra space, they were able to store more items and launched a program to supply stationery based on the requirements identified by the schools.

As word spread, residents donated high-quality goods, prompting the launch of a Saturday market in 2016. Denise took over from Elma Hunter that year and led the Junktique market for ten years until March. Until they moved out of the village, Barbara Morton and Sandy Campbell assisted Denise on Saturdays to give her a much-needed caffeine break. Anne Cameron assisted the last two years.

Running Junktique involves more than setting up a table on Saturday. You must store, clean, sort, price, and transport goods to the market, then spend several hours selling and talking with customers. The funds raised at the market (at present about R34 000/year) are ploughed back into the Swop Shop to buy basic toiletries.

Stanford must thank Denise for her unconditional service to the community. It doesn't take a village to make a village – it takes individuals…



Keith and Judi Brown moved to Stanford in March 2004 and were attracted to Stanford Conservation after attending its AGM just two weeks after arriving. As Judi says: "we came from a service club background in Richards Bay, so it was just natural to become part of a community organisation when we moved here".

In 2005, local architect Maureen Wolters asked Keith, a mechanical engineer, to join the newly-formed Heritage Committee, to provide a balance of expertise in the team.

Community organisations frequently face challenges in securing funding. Keith proposed a quiz fundraiser, inspired by a successful event in his previous life. Over the last 22 years, with diligent shepherding by others, the monthly Think & Drink initiative has generated approximately R30,000 each year for Conservation efforts.

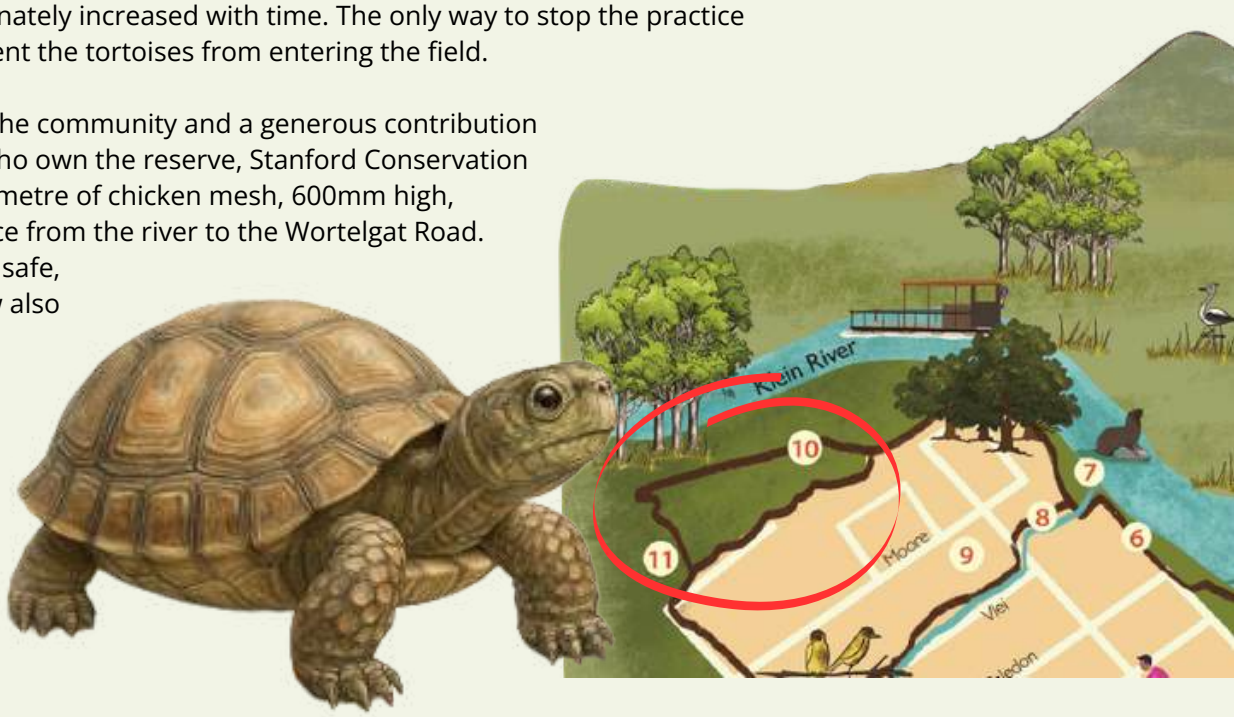
In 2008, Stanford Conservation successfully applied for a grant from the Roland and Leta Hill Trust to restore St Thomas church. Apart from the roof of the church needing repair, unsympathetic exterior plaster had to be removed and replaced with suitable pointing. Keith stepped up as project manager, and in 2009, he teamed with local volunteer architects and a structural engineer, and with Henry Gibson, Ferdie Hansen and other congregation members who did the work. The project was finished within six months. Thanks to the volunteer efforts the cost savings allowed them to carry out other necessary work as well.

Keith said, "***it has been a privilege to be involved with this body of passionate, energetic souls!"***

WE SAVED THE TORTOISES!

Since early last year, the open field at the top of the village (circled) became a poaching zone for the many tortoises who ambled between the adjacent private nature reserve and the greener grass on the Stanford side. Despite many attempts to discourage this activity, it unfortunately increased with time. The only way to stop the practice seemed to be to prevent the tortoises from entering the field.

With donations from the community and a generous contribution by the **Grier family** who own the reserve, Stanford Conservation installed almost a kilometre of chicken mesh, 600mm high, along the existing fence from the river to the Wortelgat Road. The tortoises are now safe, and fewer snakes now also frequent the field.



INVOLVEMENT, OVERSIGHT AND PARTICIPATION

Stanford Conservation is proud of its recent association with OCAN: the Overstrand Community Action Network.

Being part of a local authority, means that, as residents, we are affected by every decision made by the municipality. OCAN's formal establishment during October 2024 was triggered by informal conversations about and a subsequent independent review of the Overstrand Municipality's financial sustainability against the backdrop of rapid population growth. The findings suggested that there was a growing need for oversight by civil society in respect of municipal affairs. Local government plays a crucial role in shaping our communities, yet without effective oversight, poor financial management and inefficiencies can go unchecked.

While the Overstrand Municipality is known for its clean audits and strong service delivery, continued public engagement and collaboration is essential to maintain and enhance these standards. By leveraging expertise from across civil society, OCAN advocates for responsible financial management, sound development planning, and equitable service delivery to a sustainable high-standard. For the Overstrand Municipality to remain a well-run, financially stable municipality, residents must become more informed and engaged. By supporting OCAN, residents can help create a future where strong oversight and collaboration with local government will deliver lasting, measurable benefits for the community.

Modelled along the lines of OUTA (Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse), OCAN is an apolitical data-driven civil society community coalition. Using data, OCAN paints pictures that tell stories. These 'stories' are instrumental in helping residents to interpret information about the performance of the Overstrand Municipality and matters that impact them directly. OCAN's primary aim is to promote, advance and protect the common interests of residents and organised civil society structures within the Overstrand, with a special focus on sound financial management, good governance, local economic growth and sustainable development

Should you wish to be a member of OCAN and receive their communication, contact the organisation on info@ocan.co.za.

SAFEGUARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE R326 SCENIC ROUTE

Since 2020, there is an increasing interest for residential developments along the R326 to the east of Stanford. Despite many properties being zoned for single residential development, the Stanford East area is part of a proclaimed scenic route and currently provides the rural frame for the well-defined Stanford Heritage Village, one of a few revered historical towns in the country.

Future growth should embrace these rural and heritage features, but the lack of an existing local spatial development framework (also known as a 'precinct plan') for Stanford East will result in fragmented developments that could diminish the village's character. For example, it is possible to create residential clusters embedded in a rural landscape, where some of the vineyards could be retained and where a continuous, integrated public open space system with walking and cycling trails could thread through the area.

It is for this reason Stanford Conservation established the **Stanford Planning Group (SPG)**, as a liaison to the municipality on proposed developments. The SPG have developed a draft precinct plan for the municipality that will serve as guidelines for all development proposals. The acceptance of this draft plan is still pending.

Desired outcomes

- *Coordination and integration of planning efforts and a future planning framework for the Village and surroundings*
- *Secured high rural scenic value and ambience*
- *The heritage value of the Village is protected*
- *A productive landscape based on the principles of sustainability pivoting on social integration and establishment of circular economies*
- *Integrated public open space system for socio-ecological connectivity (recreation, amenities, aesthetics, ecosystem services, climate, storm water management etc.)*
- *Urban growth management*



STANFORD PLANNING GROUP TEAM

Key members (all Stanford residents)
Bernard Oberholzer (landscape architect):
Career achievements: improvement Durban's City Hall and beachfront precinct, Cape Town's St Georges Mall and Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, and the southern-most tip of Africa at Agulhas. Currently an independent landscape and environmental planning consultant, and visual impact assessment specialist.



Katie Smuts (archaeologist/ heritage consultant/practitioner):
Specialist in archaeological analysis of historic built fabric and form.
Heritage impact assessments and conservation management plans.
Sits on the HWC Heritage Impact Assessment Committee.



Paul Bewsher (environmental management planner):
Management plans for protected areas, including national parks, Transfrontier Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites.
Combines environmental and spatial knowledge with political science in the drafting of international agreements.

Loraine Bewsher (landscape architect):
Liaises with conservation authorities, ecologists and local communities on environmental management and cultural heritage issues, as well as facilitates planning processes.
Management and operational-level support tools for protected and conserved areas including national parks, community conservancies, Transfrontier Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, both in South Africa and the wider SADC region.

A CUT ABOVE: TOMMY NGWENYA'S GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION

T**ommy Ngwenya of Tommy and Sons Garden Service** is well-established within the community. Tommy is frequently seen driving through the area, greeting residents with a wave and a smile. His reputation extends beyond friendliness; he consistently demonstrates a commitment to giving back to the community.

Earlier this year, the Wandelpad team identified the need for substantial maintenance on the hedge along the Sannie Badenhorst Wandelpad servitude. The scope of work required was significant, so Tommy was approached for a quote. After not receiving a response, the team decided to proceed using their regular casual workers.

However, two days before the scheduled start, Tommy pipped us to the post. He efficiently cut the hedge and removed all branches at no cost, stating it was his contribution to the community!

We gratefully acknowledge Tommy's generosity and commend his example of service within our village. A model worth emulating.















If you want to make a difference, consider becoming a member. You can also make a regular or once/off large donation for which we can issue a Section 18A tax certificate.

Banking details:
Stanford Conservation
Nedbank Hermanus
Savings account 238 300 1805 or Current account 125 267 3272.

Please use your surname using ‘membership’ or ‘donation’ as reference and send proof of payment to milkwood@maxitec.co.za or 083-293-5512 so we can reach out to thank you.