

Stanford's Green Report

Stanford 1857—2017 160 years and still well preserved

Stanford has become a desirable address — the building industry is booming and our property prices are well above those of many other rural towns in the Western Cape. This is mainly due the fierce protection Stanford's "sense of place" in both its built and natural environments. Were it not for the insight of some forward-thinking Stanford residents in the early 1990s, present-day Stanford could have looked very different...

When development threatened to spoil our lovely village in the early Nineties, a few conservation-minded people met and decided to form the Stanford Conservation Trust. The aim was to protect the historical character of the town and to have it proclaimed a conservation area, as well as to protect Stanford's natural environment, specifically the leiwater system and the village's natural water resource known as "the Eye" (or "Die Bron" – hence the name of the school). This was finally formally achieved and published in the Government Gazette of December 1995.

Few people know that Mariana and Peter Esterhuizen were part of that ground-breaking group. The other two main role players were the late Peter de Villiers and David Evans. Peter used to run a restaurant in the house now occupied by Sally and Andy Johnson. His widow, Jo, still lives in the village. David had a pottery studio where the Ou Meul is today and lived in the house next door – now Kiwinet's offices.

Diarise 23 September 2017

With Stanford celebrating its 160th year as a village, Stanford Conservation plans to have a series of talks, walks, events and a photographic exhibition recalling the history of Stanford – from as far back as the early Khoi and San inhabitants to present-day efforts that aim to preserve the natural and built history of Stanford and its rural surrounds. This will be celebrated as part of Heritage weekend on Saturday 23 September.

Look forward to some guided village walks, a brisk early morning walk to the newly-discovered Khoi and San paintings at Phillippskop, traditional South Africa dinners and much more.

Please diarise this event, as we would like to inform you about all the wonderful things Stanford Conservation has done during the past year! You may just be pleasantly surprised...

AGM

12 April 2017

at

18:00

In the

Municipal

Boardroom

Aims, actions, achievements and challenges

The question is often asked “What does Stanford Conservation actually do”? The answer? “More than you ever thought it did”!

AIMS

According to the trust’s constitution its aims are to protect and conserve for future generations the **environment** in all its forms; and to protect and conserve the **heritage resources** in and around Stanford and to ensure that development that takes place is aesthetically consistent with that heritage.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

Maintenance and beautification of the Wandelpad and other green areas



For two days a week the wandelpad team plan, co-ordinate and oversee the Working for the Coast team to ensure that the wandelpad is cut, invasive species are removed, wooden structures are maintained/built, trees are planted and watered, dog poo bins are put up and cleaned, shrub undergrowth is cut open for safe walking and the invasive reeds are kept under control.

Die Bron and Willem Appel clean-up

The Stanford South community has requested the SCT to assist in opening up these areas so that they can be used for recreational activities. This is being done in consultation with the municipality as part of the two days/week wandelpad duties.

Reed encroachment

After six years of motivations explaining to the municipality that the (indigenous) invasive reeds next to the river may be cut down and/or applied with herbicide, the SCT won the battle last year when the Department of Environmental Affairs informed the municipality that we were correct in our interpretation of the law!

Encouraging recycling

Instead of recycling at home, residents of Stanford South, Thembelihle and Die Kop are encouraged to bring their recyclable materials to the Swop Shop every second week. In return they receive tokens which they exchange for school supplies and toiletries. The Swop Shop is manned by the Stanford Community Recycling (SCORE) volunteers.

HERITAGE ACTIONS



Scrutinising building plans

All building plans (which includes all minor works and alterations) in Stanford’s heritage area (which only excludes Sillery Estate and the Moore Street area) have to be sent to the Stanford Heritage Committee for comment. These comments then form part of the official submission of plans to Heritage Western Cape for its approval. Only once that approval has been obtained can building plans be submitted to the municipality for town planning approval.

Conservation overlay zone

Modern town planning rules are rarely sympathetic to heritage villages — especially when it comes to parking rules, street building lines etc. Stanford Conservation has been lobbying for more lenient rules for the past 15 years, and in the past 3 years has been actively involved in establishing a conservation overlay zone. This would relax general building and town planning principles to suit a heritage village. The battle is almost won, but still needs some final negotiation with the municipality.

Intangible heritage

Stanford has a rich history stretching far back to when the Khoi and San people grazed their cattle on the open land in the area. Lots of research is being done to obtain more information about this history which, eventually, will result in the compilation of a photographic exhibition portraying development over the centuries.

Stanford revitalisation project:

After presenting the concept to the municipality in 2014, the project is now officially included in the Integrated Development Plan, with a budget allocated to it. In the next few years, SCT will be actively be involved in realising this project.



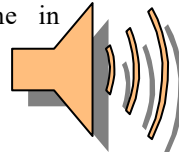
OTHER ACTIVITIES

Ward Committee representation

Stanford Conservation is one of the three Stanford organisations represented on the Ward Committee. This networking with the municipality is extremely important in achieving our goals and is one of the reasons why so much has been achieved to date.

Collaboration with other organisations

Cohesiveness is only possible if everyone in Stanford strives to reach common goals.



CHALLENGES

Communication

We strive to inform Stanfordinians about what we do, but the village is growing at such a speed that this aspect needs further improvement.

Membership

Although most of the work is done by volunteers, the wandelpad (especially) requires a substantial amount of funding each year. Increasing our membership base remains a challenge.

Commitment

It may all sound very simple, but it needs a dedicated team of volunteers who work extremely hard behind the scenes to make our village one of the most desirable villages to live in (and to improve the return on your investment). Please contact us (see front page for contact details) should you be interested in being part of this inspiring group of people.

Ideal adventure area being opened up

Just imagine what it would mean to Stanford once the area below the Die Bron School is cleared of all the invasive species and the area is maintained for beneficial use by the community.

At the moment the entangled mess of overgrown shrubs and trees makes it an ideal place for illegal dumping and unsavoury human behaviour.

Stanford Conservation, in consultation with Whale Coast Conservation and the municipality, has started clearing the area so that it can be developed into a recreational area. As recreational and/or physical training facilities fall outside the ambit of the SCT, we urge residents to think how this could be established.

Clearing this area, as well as the reed-infested area below the Willem Appel dam wall, will be a major social and environmental feat, although its maintenance will remain a challenge for many years. Stanford Conservation has committed itself to both the clearing and the future maintenance — albeit with some municipal assistance. It has applied for municipal Grant-in-Aid funds to complete the clearing in 2017/18 and the wandelpad team believes that the entire area could be cleared by June 2018 latest.

It's also one of the few breeding areas of the endangered Western Cape Leopard Toad. Making it more accessible for the toad-lets to disperse themselves into the wider world will put Stanford on the map as one of the 'must go' centres to see these toads.

Maybe it would even be possible to establish an environmental centre on the site (tourism attraction) and provide guided "toad and dragonfly" walks (job creation)... who knows what the future holds?



Members of the wandelpad team (above) strategizing on the way forward so that the entire area can look like the area already cleared (right)



SCORE — Request for donations

The Stanford Community Recycling project's Swop Shop relies solely on donations for its existence. Children and parents come with bags full of recyclable materials to swop the tokens they receive for school supplies and highly-prized toiletries.

Please consider donating some soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes and roll-on deodorant and putting it in the dedicated container at Coffee Corner. Alternatively a monthly/annual donation would be very much appreciated. This can be done directly into the SCT's bank account with the reference SCORE and surname (if you want to). NEDBANK Hermanus (Branch code 13451200) Savings Account No. 2383001805 (FNB clients need to specify that it is a savings account).



New chairman and treasurer sought

Both Bea Whittaker (chairman) and Penny Paddick (treasurer) are stepping down from their respective positions on the Stanford Conservation Trust's management committee.

Please contact Linda Strydom on lindainstanford@gmail.com or 083-844-3707 should you be interested in any of these two vacancies and to obtain a nomination form.

CONSERVATION OVERLAY ZONE

what it could mean for Stanford property owners

Almost 15 years after Stanford Conservation made its first request to the municipality to proclaim bylaws that will protect Stanford's architectural and environmental heritage, they should soon become a reality.

Town planning regulations rule all development and building works in a municipal area. These regulations are contained in a municipal zoning scheme, which stipulates specifications such as building lines and heights, parking requirements, development density and land use.

When Stanford was a stand-alone municipality there was an excellent working relationship between the two entities. The result was that Stanford was the first town in the Overstrand area to develop a zoning scheme and have an advisory aesthetics committee. The zoning scheme regulations were proclaimed soon after the Overstrand Municipality was established (2001) as a result of the national policy to create larger, wall-to-wall municipalities. With almost immediate effect the recommendations made by the Stanford Aesthetics Committee were repeatedly overruled by the Overstrand Municipality, resulting in some unfortunate and non-sympathetic building work taking place for a number of years.

In 2005 Stanford Conservation requested the assistance of Heritage Western Cape to impress upon the Overstrand Municipality its obligations with regard to Stanford's heritage status. The SCT was then promised that these aspects would be addressed in the Overstrand Zoning Scheme Regulations. These took more than 9 years to finalise and despite numerous letters, proposals, submissions and promises that our concerns would be taken into account, the 2013 Overstrand Zoning Scheme regulations were proclaimed without the inclusion of any of the special protection or relaxed town planning regulations that are paramount to protecting a heritage area.

Further correspondence followed and town planning informed the SCT that the required protection will be provided in the conservation overlay zone, which has been developed over the past 2-3 years.

STANFORD CONSERVATION OVERLAY ZONE

Although the Stanford Heritage Committee has been consulted during the drafting of the overlay zone and

has commented on the various versions thereof, the final draft made available for comment in December 2016 was still not regarded as adequate to protect Stanford's unique sense of place. Final comments (12 pages!) have been submitted, and a request to discuss these matters with town planning instead of the consultants has finally been granted and will take place this month.

The following are the most salient points the Stanford Heritage Committee (SHC) will be discussing for inclusion in the conservation overlay zone (only applicable to the proclaimed heritage area):

Relaxation of street building lines

The SHC feels that the street building and town planning lines in the conservation overlay zone should be relaxed to zero. At present the street building line is 4 metres, and any alterations and or new building works within this line (all part of an effort to maintain the historical streetscape) has become a very costly and lengthy exercise because of waiver applications, advertisements etc.

Relaxation of parking requirements for business premises

Should the existing parking requirements of 4 parking bays/100m² on commercially zone properties not be relaxed, every bit of open land along Queen Victoria Street will have to be changed into parking space, completely destroying the rural character of the village. The SHC proposes that parking should not take preference over 'sense of place' and has stated that sufficient parking is available and/or should be developed in the side streets. We believe that pieces of metal (cars) should not be regarded as being more important to the unique character of a heritage village than its pedestrians. It also mentioned that the Stanford Revitalisation Plan will provide more than sufficient parking around the village green.

Municipal infrastructure

Attention has been drawn to the elimination of 'hard' engineering infrastructure and the need for sensitive placement of necessary infrastructure such as electricity boxes and kerbing.

Leiwater

The SCT has requested that The Eye and its water furrow (leiwater) system be regarded as a heritage asset and be protected within the overlay zone.