

Minutes of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the St Andrew's Prep Association  
held in the Centre for Creative Learning  
on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2017.

1. Welcome and Apologies. The Chairman of the Prep Board, Mr Simon Oliver welcomed the assembled company, and asked for apologies.

1.1. Those present: Ryan Franz; Richard Short; Mick van Lingen; Jo Berlyn; Grant Baxter; Thomas Blaine; Chris Watley; Ronwynne Barnard; Liezel Vermeulen; Michelle Vermeulen; Debbie Lowe; Niall Wylde; Geoff Bennett; Richard Laing; Margie Laing; Mark Cotton; Jeremy Blair- Hook; Gavin Keeton; Viv de Klerk; Billy de Klerk; Tony Butler; Jörn Woker; Lauren Libera; Doug Rodd; Brendan Brady (headmaster); Simon Oliver; Gavin Keeton; Lorraine Mullins

1.2. Apologies received: Rob Beer; Fiona Meihuizen; James Greener; Hugh Hart; Mark Askew; Duncan McGregor; Ward Hobson; Gavin D'Arcy; Steve Elkington; Roy Baxter; Evan Edwards; Jeff Chapman; Anthony Rawbone-Viljoen; Siphon Nghona; Henry Beckett; Harold Gess.

2. Headmaster, Mr Brendan Brady, read the School Prayer.

3. Roll of Honour. Secretary Lorraine Mullins read the names of the following, and asked for a moment of silence:

Anthony Hugh Currie  
Gwynne Beamish  
Julian Richard Meyrick Bowker  
Anthony Ashley Brooker  
Pieter de Waal  
Victor Anthony Dorman-Smith  
Timotheus Mthuzeli Fani  
Edmund Brent Gibbons  
Denis Edmund Hockly  
Samuel Mark Lloyd  
Geoffrey Andrew Lovemore  
Gaynor Rosemary Miles  
Jonathan Desmond Ablort Morgan  
Roland Harvey Nicholson  
Gavin Michael Nunn  
John Stephen Milsome Orford  
Michael Egerton Creigh Rushmere  
Colwyn Barry Sampson  
Frederick James Michael Faraday Stones  
Ludwe Sanele Titus  
George Henry Tyers  
Guy Spencer Lesrend Whittle

(Additions: Patrick Ormond Butler; Ndyebo Richman Nghona)

#### 4. Benefactors.

4.1. The Constitution of the Old Prep Association allows (Section 3.5) that “the Association shall have the discretion to elect any other person who, with reason acceptable to its members, may be regarded as a “Friend of Prep”. Such a person shall then be listed as an Honorary Life Member”.

At this 2017 AGM it is our pleasure to award Honorary Life Membership on the following friends of Prep.

Prof. Vivian de Klerk former Dean and Students and Professor of Linguistics at Rhodes University served with loyal distinction on the Prep Board of Governors from 1991 to 1997. A parent and sister of 2 OPs she was the first woman to be appointed to the Board (which does not reflect well on its members from its formation in 1946, nor on us members of the Old Prep Association!).

Mrs Debbie Lowe joined the Junior Prep Staff in the year 2000. She has served faithfully as the JP’s Remedial teacher, and on the courts and fields of Fairlawn. She was recognised as a Prep Benefactor back in 2010. But, never one to hold back, Debbie remarked, “Hey! I never got any gift!” So, we hang our heads and ask her forgiveness, and put the omission straight.

Mr Zane Plescia came to Prep as a stooge, and has been a fine teacher here since 2007. He was appointed to take charge of the IT Dept. from the beginning of this year, but regrettably yet wisely, has resigned to take up a teaching post in England. His service to Prep sport, in particular as Master i.c. Cricket, has been quite remarkable. We wish him well and thank him for all he has done for Prep.

Mr Gert Roodt of the IT Dept. for our 3 schools has also been our IT expert for 11 years. He has been responsible for the construction and maintenance of, first, the Smithy laboratory, and now the Currey-Gransden IT Centre. Prep can be proud of its IT Dept. thanks largely to Gerd’s faithful service. The Headmaster has more lined up for Gerd to do and we are delighted that he will be fulfilling his role in future as an Old Preppie

The late Mrs Gaynor Miles who died only a few days ago, was Prep’s full-time Remedial teacher, serving from 1981 to 1987. It is much to our regret that we were unable to recognise in person, her distinguished work with those with academic difficulties. We give heartfelt condolences to husband Lewis (OP) and their children, Shelley and Shaun.

The following were recognised as Benefactors (Friends of the School) at the end of 2016: Karen Hobson; Mandy Jackson; Richard Jackson.

Benefactors 2018. The following will be invited: Sukiswa Fesi and Cindy Renard. Further suggestions are invited. (Contact r.mullins @imaginet.co.za).

4.2. The following were recognised as Benefactors (Friends of the School) at the end of 2016: Karen Hobson; Mandy Jackson; Richard Jackson.

4.3. Benefactors 2018. The following will be invited: Sukiswa Fesi and Cindy Renard. Further suggestions are invited. (Contact r.mullins @imaginet.co.za).

## 5. Committees.

5.1. Old Prep Association Committee: Rob Beer (OP Donor); Brendan Brady (Headmaster); Liezel Coetzee (Foundation Office); Harold Gess (OP); Scott Jackson (OP, College Rep.); Gavin Keeton (OP, Com.Chair); Fiona Meihuizen (ne'e Hodgson, OP, DSG Rep.); Lorraine Mullins (OP, Hon. Sec.). Harold Hobson resigned in 2016.

5.2. Old Preppies on the Board: Mahesh Gopal; Gavin Keeton (Vice Chair); Gavin Shone (College Business Manager, attending).

5.3. Old Preppies on College Council: John Dovey; Gavin Keeton; Simphiwe Nghona.

In attendance: Gavin Shone (Business Manager); Günther Marx (Deputy Headmaster Student affairs).

Gavin assured the meeting that Prep was well cared for in Council.

## 6. Reports.

### 6.1. Headmaster, Mr Brendan Brady

Good morning,

#### GENERAL

I find Prep a happy school with good staff, wonderful children and a genuine sense of community. Despite the high staff turnover at the end of 2016 (eight staff left – all for good reason: promotion, retirement, relocation) the new staff appointed have settled well and have slotted easily in to the routines of Prep. Congratulations to Marc Paul on the appointments made at the end of last year.

Mr Zane Plescia, HOD IT, 1st XI cricket coach and Cubs Dad, long serving staff member has been appointed as HOD IT at Ludgrove School in the UK. The search for his replacement has begun. Ms Alex McIntosh has also resigned her position as Housemother of Griffin. She has been replaced with Mrs Alison Wienekus who commences her role in September. Mr Patrick Gumunyu has been appointed Director of Sport from 1 September 2017

#### PLANT

The Academic Excellence programme has had a change of focus. The second phase at Prep was supposed to be the relocation of the workshops and a revamp of the current space into a music practise area. The focus will be on upgrading the classrooms into modern teaching spaces.

Boarding will also be upgraded to a more modern space and the JP boarders will return to Fairlawn.

Architects sketch showing the proposed outside teaching spaces, the new doors leading to the outside and the redesigned classrooms

Architects model of the upgraded classrooms at Top Prep

Architects impression of the outside teaching space at Top Prep

The current Griffin dorm

An impression of the new dorm structure

## ACADEMICS

Academics at Prep are solid without being exceptional. As with all schools we have our stars. Highlights are the AP Maths programme, Maker Space and D&T thanks to the new CCL, a thematic approach to project based learning

A new no-homework policy is being introduced from term 3. It aligns with research into the effectiveness of homework and brain research regarding executive functioning in children.

We are working with DSG on developing Maths and English standards to be taught concurrently in both schools.

Although we have an exceptional IT lab, we are integrating IT into the classroom with a 1:1 iPad programme in Grade 6 and 7 and a school bank of iPads for Grade 4 and 5. Not sure yet what the effectiveness of such a programme is.

Timetable structures will change in 2018 – we need more time in the academic day as we are losing approximately 29 school days in the year through shortened days and days sacrificed to sport and holidays/half terms.

Developing a week-long programme for Grade 7 at Amakhala Game Reserve.

## SPORT

I cannot say enough good things about the quality of coaching and style of play in all the games, it is amongst the best coaching structures I have seen at Prep School level.

We beat Grey at cricket, hockey and rugby at 1st team level this year and a review of the programme will be conducted when the Director of Sport arrives.

## ARTS AND CULTURE

We have an exceptionally busy programme with 80% of all Prep boys playing an individual music instrument.

The choir has 90 members and recently performed in the Youth Music Festival. Our individual musicians were excellent.

Art, pottery and a variety of creative disciplines take place in the CCL and adjacent Pottery Studio and it provides exceptional creative spaces for the boys.

Thank you.

## 6.2. Association Chairman: Gavin Keeton

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today. I am going to keep this address short, as we want to leave time for you to have a tour of Prep before racing back to College for Reunion photographs at the Clock Tower.

For some of our Reunion visitors this is your first visit back to Prep in many years. You will notice that in terms of physical environment little has changed. Prep still looks the same as when you were a Preppie – except everything has shrunk! I bet you remember the classrooms and Hasie Court as being much bigger than they are now. Only this building in which we are meeting is new.

But when you go on your tour with Lorraine you will notice that the dormitories are a lot more glamorous than when you were here. The old library is now a modern IT centre. This wonderful facility was opened last year, transforming a shockingly dilapidated art room into a vibrant creative space. It provides now a showpiece for the school when we host the annual Children's Art Festival. And you have heard the exciting news from our Headmaster about the exciting developments that are on the way.

If you have not done so, you really must read Lorraine's book on Prep. I confess that previously I had jumped into it in a haphazard fashion. Last Christmas I finally started at the beginning. It tells an amazing story of family, giving, faith and dedication, at the same time as recording the story of more than 125 years of little boys and later girls at this school. It also tells a story of struggle – with Prep's fortunes waxing and waning mainly alongside the fortunes of our local farming community.

For most of Prep's existence it has struggled financially. While money is still far from plentiful, the merger with College in 2005 gave Prep access to big brothers with deeper pockets. It is a global reality that past pupils give more generously to their high schools than to their prep schools. By including Prep in the Academic Excellence fundraising drive currently underway we have been able to build this Centre in which we are meeting. Approval is still needed by Council, but we are optimistic that funds will be made available for the projects Brendan described today.

For parents battling to pay very high private school fees it is hard to believe that their fees only pay for the running costs of the school and maintenance of the plant we already have. Nothing is left over for new developments. These rely totally on the generosity of past pupils and parents.

It is not a secret that Prep still runs at a loss, but this is now manageable. Schools' finances are all about numbers and Prep is located in an economically depressed part of the country. But improved physical infrastructure and improved academic, cultural and sporting performance attracts new pupils and so our numbers, including boarding, are rising. Brendan outlined plans to accommodate more boarders and pupils. This vision is not based on the approach of "if you build it they will come" as in the Kevin Costner movie "Field of Dreams". It will be accompanied by extensive and focused marketing.

But in the end our best marketers are our parents and old pupils. It is you sending your children and persuading friends and colleagues to send their children to our Family of Schools that makes the difference.

The role of the Old Prep Association is to preserve the ethos and traditions of Prep. I think you can be happy that this is being done. It is also to communicate with past pupils. In this regard we need to do better. I think we have relied too much on the excellent work being done down at College and on the existing links through the OA Club or DSG Guild. We have resolved to provide more Old Prep information on the OPA link on the Prep website and to get an Old Prep Facebook page going.

I urge you all to use the webpage every now and again to read Brendan's weekly newsletters. They give such a delightful insight into the energy and successes of our children and teachers. I promise that every time you will finish reading with a warm feeling in your heart and a smile on your face.

Thank you for listening to me.

6.3. Board Chairman: Simon Oliver

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome back to Prep, and thank for your attendance of this year's AGM.

Last year I said Prep was in great shape, and it was. We had recently completed the Gransden Curry Computer Centre, we were well on our way to completing the "Centre for Creative Learning" and were in the process of finding a new team to continue to develop Prep. We were also raising capital to fund the inspirational "Academic Excellence" programme.

Since then the "Centre for Creative Learning" has been completed and is achieving all we wanted from it; excited children daring to explore and learn. Angie Mariner has done an excellent job in raising the funds needed to continue the Academic Excellence programme and most importantly we have recruited a great team to help us ensure that Prep delivers to its full potential. I would like to thank the College executive and Council for their support through this process and to Marc Paul for his guidance during the selection process and for steadying the ship after the previous Headmaster left.

Since his arrival Brendon has quickly reviewed Prep's priorities and focused on delivering quality education in the right environment. This has meant that the

changes that were planned for the Music centre and the maintenance facilities have been put on hold. The classrooms will be upgraded to give the boys more space, the ability to enjoy collaborative learning both indoors and outdoors and to integrate IT into all aspects of learning.

Brendon also has plans to change the boarding facilities to that the boys have more privacy and responsibility. At the same time we are increasing the number of boarders we can accommodate from 70 to 100.

He is also targeting the Eastern Cape for new recruits to Prep and is already reaping rewards from this exercise. Our numbers are up to 280.

I would like to thank Gavin Keeton, and the rest of the Board for their support. The whole body of teachers have been wonderful in facilitating and embracing the changes that are being made to ensure that Prep is the most relevant Preparatory school in our area. I would also like to thank the parents for sending their children to Prep and for so many of them that work tirelessly to building the ethos of Prep, raise funds and bring the real human side to our school.

I'm excited. Thank you  
Thank you

7. General.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed.