

ST CYPRIANS UNION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the AGM of St Cyprian's Union for 2017 held at St Cyprian's School 21st September 2017
at 17h00.

PRESENT

Mrs Sue Redelinghuys (Principal of SCS and President of the Union), Cebisa Mfenyana (Union Vice-Chairman), and 29 members of the Union.

1 WELCOME

Cebisa Mfenyana welcomed all those present. Sue Redelinghuys welcomed the union groups.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved.

3 CHAIRMANS REPORT

This had been sent to all. In addition, Cebisa Mfenyana introduced herself as the Vice-Chairman of the Union Committee. Special mention was made of Sue Townsend, our Chairman, who could not be present today but who was especially commended for her work for the school – providing a bridge between the school and the Old Girls Union.

4 Vision for SCS 2017

Sue Redelinghuys, gave a very interesting talk about how the changes at St Cyprian's are not just about physical buildings, but also about developing an educational vision for the future.

The purpose of education has changed through the ages – moving from the Industrial Age of the 19th century, through the Information Age of the 20th century to the 21st century where we have arrived at the Conceptual Age. Our curriculum for today must reflect this so the challenge is not to learn facts as these are all accessible from the internet, but to be able to use the information that we need AND to be able to filter out the information that we do not need. The people who will thrive are those that can offer something to someone else and we are witnessing the decline of the corporate career, shops give way to internet shopping etc. To handle these changes our girls must be equipped to close the skills gap in a world where unemployment is rising, drop-out rates from university are rising and there is a mismatch between academia and what the job-market really needs.

The Conceptual Age could also be termed the Age of Disruption as we see business models turned on their head – as seen by the rise of companies such as Uber, Air BnB, Snapscan etc. Forward thinking companies are working hard to change with the times – and we must too.

So these will be the future work skill drivers:

- Computational/cognitive load management – must be able to filter out unnecessary information
- New media ecology – TV and radio will be out and phones are in – but can we humanise this new technology
- Adapted cross-cultural thinking – we need to triumph over the fear of 'other' – we have seen the backlash in the form of Brexit, Trump etc
- Real-life problem solving – especially around the issue of poverty and how to alleviate it.
- Adaptability to change – the 21st century shift is from 'me' to 'interconnectiveness' .

How does this translate into the school curriculum?

- The re-framing of maths and science – seeing patterns, data analysis and application of knowledge to explore and solve real-life issues.
- Importance of Humanities for developing meaningful communication and conceptual reasoning.

- Complex thinking development to encourage entrepreneurial thinking, design thinking and critical/creative thinking

How do we achieve this?

Through a combination of the Home – ie. parents and family, working with the School – ie teachers and learners, within a context of an educational Environment – ie the buildings and grounds.

Physical changes at St Cyprian's

The junior school classrooms have been upgraded and expanded in a manner that invites them to explore and take charge of their own learning. In line with this there is a new Discovery Centre which is physically linked to the classrooms.

The boarding house has had an upgrade, creating a more home from home atmosphere. There is a new kitchen next to the common room where they can cook and prepare snacks. Bathrooms have been re-done, as well as the matric corridor. All these changes aim to foster a feeling of family and a shared sisterhood.

The School-in-the-Woods has also had some changes. There is a new office conversion, the ballet centre waiting-area has been redecorated, there is a delightful new fairy garden, a tree-nest, cycle track and new jungle gyms. A new initiative is the Coffee in the Woods, which provides coffee and muffins (made by the Gr10 Business Studies girls) to parents and girls at drop-off times. It is not a profit-making enterprise but creates employment for the ladies who run it.

The old head mistresses' cottage, Oakhurst Cottage has been converted into two classrooms and a student support centre. A few years ago the school purchased Sylvan House as new accommodation for the principal, situated just above the hockey field. In addition to this the school was able to purchase Sidmouth House and Cottage – two properties next to the School-in-the-Woods. They are presently rented out but may one day be converted into a new boarding house or extra classrooms.

The Haggie Hall has had an upgrade with a new acoustic ceiling and a new entertainment space.

Through the vision for SCS150, the plans for a new swimming pool which can be used for water polo will be built, as well as the new through road from Belmont Avenue to Sylvan Close.

St Cyprian's is leading the way in terms of the following educational imperatives:

- Values
- Diversity
- Extraordinary teachers
- Educational vision
- Discovery Framework

The question we need to tackle is how to open this up to more girls from different backgrounds?

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

One of the main focuses of the Union Committee is to raise money in order to offer more bursaries to the school. We also aim to keep our membership up-to-date with school life and maintain connections between ourselves. The classed of '57, 67 and 77 all asked to say thank-you for the efforts of the committee and especially Carmen for organising the reunions.

Astrid Liebrecht-Meyer gave a short presentation on the Union finances – all of which can be seen in the Annual Financial Report sent out by Sue Townsend.

Felicity Chetwin will be retiring as the Secretary after 5 years.

6 CLOSURE

The meeting ended at 18.10 pm