

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting:** Hardekraaltjie Check-In Meeting

**Date:** 04 February 2026

**Time:** 07:15 – 08:00

**Platform:** MS Teams

**Present:**

- Jenna Theron – PHS Consulting
  - Paul Slabbert – PHS Consulting
  - Chefferino Fortuin – Community Representative
  - Johannes Bastian – Community Representative
  - Leslie van Rooi – Stellenbosch University
  - Therese Fish – Stellenbosch University
  - Carol Goss as secretariate
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### **1. Welcome**

Paul Slabbert welcomed all participants to the meeting.

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### **2.1 Ground-Truthing**

Paul Slabbert provided a recap of the process to date:

- Heritage Western Cape (HWC) required that ground truthing be undertaken, with the results to be incorporated into the Heritage Statement and consulted on before a final decision could be made.
- Ground truthing was authorised by HWC and conducted on 5–6 January 2026.
- The work was undertaken by Dr Jason Orton, and his report was circulated to HWC and all parties present at this meeting.

- The report concludes that no graves were found in the targeted ground-truthing areas.
- Dr Orton noted that the sports field area was historically low-lying and likely part of a floodplain, making it unsuitable for burials.
- The cemetery area historically comprised higher-lying sandy soil, more conducive to burials.

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## **2.2. Conclusions and Proposed Way Forward**

Paul Slabbert outlined the following conclusions:

1. Sporting activities were instructed to stop in 2025 until ground-truthing had taken place.
2. Considering the findings of the ground-truthing which were conclusive in that no graves were found, it is the intention to resume sporting activities on the sports field by mid-February 2026.
3. The findings support a position that memorialisation of the core erf and adjacent sliver is accurate and feasible, based on the ground-truthing results.

Paul opened the floor for comments from the community representatives.

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## **2.3. Community Input and Discussion**

### **Chefferino Fortuin:**

- Confirmed that he and Johannes Bastian were present during the process.
- Noted that Dr Orton delivered the report within two days.
- Stated that the report, in his opinion, is viewed as inconclusive, as only certain areas were tested.
- Expressed concern that the absence of graves in tested areas does not conclusively mean there are no graves elsewhere.

**Paul Slabbert:**

- Clarified that the report indicates it is highly unlikely that burials exist on the sports field and adjacent area.
- Stated that the report does not describe the findings as inconclusive.

**Chefferino Fortuin:**

- Noted that ground truthing was limited to selected markers and that Dr Orton's conclusion was based on 4–6 excavated areas [this is in fact 6].

**Paul Slabbert:**

- Explained that the scanned areas identified potential grave locations, which informed where ground truthing was undertaken.
- Referred to Dr Lita Webley's supplementary report for Tygerbery Hospital, which cast doubt around the presence of graves identified by the GPR Scanning outside the cemetery (which was prior to ground truthing).

**Leslie van Rooi:**

- Indicated that the report is helpful and that both scanning and ground truthing were conducted as agreed.
- Emphasised that historical floodplain conditions provide scientific evidence that burials would be unlikely in the lower-lying areas.
- Acknowledged that higher-lying areas could historically have been considered for burials, but the lower areas are highly unlikely to have formed part of the cemetery, which is where the sport field is situated.

**Therese Fish:**

- Concurred with Leslie van Rooi’s comments.
- Noted that HWC agreed that only the targeted areas were to be investigated.
- Indicated that guidance from HWC is needed on next steps.
- Expressed concern about reaching consensus and noted the difficulty of asking the University to stop sport with the scientific evidence presented in the Orton report.
- Highlighted that the process has been ongoing for four years and that any further delays may make it difficult to ensure that project is funded in a sustainable way.

**Johannes Bastian:**

- Noted that the Khoi had asked him whether any soil testing was undertaken on the site to determine if human remains may still be present.
- Commented on the Newspaper article on one of the information boards at the Hardekraaltjie Cemetery – “Begraafplaas word dalk sportveld vir Maties”.
- Expressed respect for the experts’ opinions but disagreed based on historical context.
- Stated that apartheid-era practices may have concealed remains.
- Referred to the ongoing living memory and pain associated with the site.

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**3.1 Public Consultation Process**

Paul Slabbert noted the following:

- Based on scientific findings, the indication is that there are no graves in the investigated areas.
- The report does not state that findings are inconclusive. It states, “It is considered highly unlikely that burials occurred outside of the known historical Hardekraaltjie Cemetery and it is recommended that this portion of erf 24602 should not be considered as potentially being part of the historic cemetery.”

- The report will be made public as an Appendices to the updated Heritage Statement which will outline the proposed Memorialisation Proposal
- Input is required regarding the 30-day public consultation process, including whether to hold a public meeting and the location thereof.

**Chefferino Fortuin:**

- Recommended holding a public meeting within the community to allow for questions and input.

**Paul Slabbert:**

- Proposed Ravensmead Library as the meeting venue.
- Confirmed that invitations will be sent to all relevant parties (Registered I&APs), which includes the student body and Khoisan representatives.
- Noted that there will be a two-week notice period.
- Confirmed that feedback can also be submitted in writing within the 30-day comment period.

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**3.2 Additional Actions**

1. Paul Slabbert to keep Johannes Bastian and Chefferino Fortuin informed once the 30-day consultation launch and meeting date are confirmed.
  2. Therese Fish requested that the website link to be circulated from Jenna Theron to include in Stellenbosch University communication.
  3. Jenna Theron confirmed that she will send the requested link (as will be communicated to all registered I&APs).
  4. Jenna Theron indicated that the link can then be circulated internally to the campus community.
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#### **4. Provincial Heritage Site Nomination (PHS)**

Chefferino Fortuin had written to the University in Dec 2025, in respect of PHS nomination of the Hardekraaltjie Cemetery.

##### **Paul Slabbert:**

- Noted that once the site is memorialised, declaring it a Provincial Heritage Site would not be problematic, if required.
- Indicated that requesting a signature from Stellenbosch University at this stage is premature, as the current process must first be concluded.

##### **Chefferino Fortuin:**

- Confirmed that the nomination request for signature was sent to SU, Tygerberg Hospital, and Transnet.
- Indicated that the nomination process has already started and that the PHS nomination is in process.

##### **Paul Slabbert:**

- Noted that the nomination process was not communicated to Stellenbosch University previously through the PPP.
- Queried whether Stellenbosch University had been informed of the broader process.

##### **Chefferino Fortuin:**

- Confirmed that Heritage Western Cape is aware of both processes and will inform all parties as the process unfolds, noting that Stellenbosch University is ultimately the landowner. The PHS would require the landowners consent.

**Leslie van Rooi:**

- Emphasised that the memorialisation process and provincial heritage nomination are separate processes and should not be conflated.
- Confirmed that the PHS process has been shared with Facilities Management at Stellenbosch University.
- Indicated that preliminary feedback suggests that careful consideration is required regarding grading and responsibility of the site.
- Confirmed that memorialisation is the University's priority.

**Therese Fish:**

- Confirmed that Stellenbosch University could support the PHS process regarding the area to be Memorialised (Erf 15349 & Erf 18228), but that this would not include the existing sports field (Erf 24602).
- Expressed concern that merging the two processes could delay memorialisation and negatively impact the process moving forward.

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**5. Closing Remarks**

Paul Slabbert reiterated that:

- Any recommendation for Provincial Heritage Site status should relate only to the memorialised area.
- Stellenbosch University does not oppose heritage declaration of the core erf and sliver (Erf 15349 & Erf 18228).
- A 30-day public consultation process will follow as per HWC request.



Paul Slabbert mentioned that the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) would be compiled in consultation with the proposed HMMC and that this would be a condition of HWC Approval.

Chefferino Fortuin indicated that he would recommend that the Draft CMP be included in the next round of PPP.