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Enquiries: S Howes

Institution Development and Coordination Minute: 0002/2020

To: District Officials, Departmental Heads, Principals, Members of governing bodies and Educators

Subject: Invitation to schools to apply for blue heritage plaques in 2020

1. General information on the Blue Plaque Schools Project 2020

- 1.1 The Blue Plaque Schools Project was initiated by the Centre for Conservation Education and the Simon van der Stel Foundation in 2015. Since then, 21 schools in Cape Town have received blue heritage plaques.
- 1.2 Many schools have a long history and a proud heritage of providing education to their communities. Some of these schools are household names, their excellence having reached the public's attention in several ways. Yet many others have remained unnoticed in the shadows due to our country's inequitable past. This is particularly true of the many mission schools that developed into fine institutions in underprivileged communities. The Western Cape Education Department's belief is that every school counts and that all schools deserve recognition for their contributions.
- 1.3 In 2019 the following schools were awarded blue plaques:
 - Muhammedeya Primary (for the contribution made by a past teacher: Muhammed Salie Berdien)
 - West End Primary (for exceptional service to the community)
- 1.4 Blue plaques are an internationally recognised symbol of buildings and places that have an important significance in the history and heritage of a local area. The Heritage Association of South Africa (formerly the Simon van der Stel Foundation and hereafter referred to as "the HASA") has run a Blue Plaque Project for the last 50 years.
- 1.5 This project means that historically interesting and valuable buildings and sites are given recognition and status through the awarding of a blue plaque. For more

information and to see images of blue plaques awarded go to www.simonvdstel.org or www.heritagesa.org.

- 1.6 Schools have largely been overlooked and under-represented in the awarding of blue plaques. The Centre for Conservation Education (hereafter referred to as “the Centre”) and the HASA would like to make schools aware of the project and encourage those schools that feel they qualify for a blue plaque to apply by paying careful attention to the categories listed in paragraph 4.
- 1.7 Until recently, blue plaques could not be awarded to schools outside the metropolitan areas of Cape Town. This has, however, changed since the HASA has given its support to the project. The support of local heritage foundations has also been solicited and some of these have pledged to sponsor blue plaques for deserving schools that are unable to pay for them themselves:
- a) Cape Town area: Simon van der Stel Heritage Foundation (1 free plaque/year)
 - b) Paarl area: Drakenstein Heritage Foundation (1 free plaque/year)
 - c) Stellenbosch area: Stellenbosch Heritage Foundation (1 free plaque/year)
 - d) Schools in other areas can still apply but must be prepared to pay for their blue plaques themselves.
- 1.8 This project is thus now open to all schools in the Western Cape. However, numbers will be limited due to the administration involved.

2. **Benefits for schools**

- 2.1 Receiving a blue plaque can have the following benefits for schools:
- a) Blue plaques are internationally recognised as symbols of the heritage status of a building or site.
 - b) Blue plaques are prestigious and only a limited number will be awarded every year depending on the available resources and administration involved.
 - c) Blue plaques are affixed to the front of the school as a permanent historical marker to commemorate a link between the school and an activity, event or person. They are prominently displayed so that learners, parents and visitors can see them.
 - d) Through being awarded a blue plaque, a school receives recognition for the contribution it has made to the education of its community and to education in general.
 - e) Blue plaques are a source of community pride and achievement.
 - f) The blue plaques are tastefully designed and made of durable materials.
 - g) Schools decide on the language and wording on the plaques themselves, with input and approval from a panel appointed by the HASA and/or its affiliates.
 - h) Schools that receive blue plaques will be listed on the HASA and local heritage foundations' websites.

2.2 The application process has been kept simple so that schools are not required to spend unnecessary time making lengthy and elaborate proposals.

3. **How the Blue Plaque Schools Project works**

3.1 The plaques are expensive to manufacture. For 2020, the HASA, through its affiliates (the heritage foundations listed in paragraph 1.7), will award **blue plaques to three deserving schools** within the areas covered by these foundations **at no cost to the schools**, other than to collect the plaque and mount it. Schools that feel they fit the criteria are invited to apply.

3.2 However, schools that are in a position to pay for the blue plaque themselves are also invited to apply. **Five** schools can be considered under this option.

3.3 The cost of a blue plaque, excluding installation, may vary between R1 800,00 and R3 000,00 depending on which supplier the heritage foundation (see paragraph 1.7) uses and the materials used. Successful applicant schools that will carry the costs themselves will be invoiced for 100% of the costs before the plaque is ordered.

3.4 Every application will be considered on merit by a panel of adjudicators representing the HASA, the various heritage foundations and the Centre. Schools need only meet **one of the six criteria** listed in paragraph 4. Schools must motivate their application (listing sources so that information can be verified), must declare themselves willing to display the blue plaque on the front of their building and must submit their application by the due date. An application form (Annexure A) is attached. **Schools are reminded that submitting an application does not automatically guarantee success.**

3.5 Schools will be notified via email and telephone whether they have been awarded a blue plaque or not. This is entirely at the discretion of the panel. Schools that meet the criteria but that cannot be accommodated due to a large number of applications will be asked to re-submit the following year.

3.6 Schools that receive blue plaques should **inform their learners, parents, governing bodies and school communities** of this recognition. Learners, in particular, should be made aware of the plaque's symbolism and value.

3.7 Schools that receive blue plaques should **organise an official handing over and unveiling ceremony** themselves at a date and time that suits the school and the organisers. It should, if possible, be **within the same calendar year as the award** and **learners should preferably be involved**. A representative from the HASA, the heritage foundation concerned or the Centre will be present if invited. The blue plaque should be affixed to the wall a few days before the event.

4. **Categories**

4.1 The categories are as follows:

- a) The age of the school (must be older than 125 years to qualify)
- b) An architecturally significant building (e.g. well-known architect, building style, etc.)
- c) The school's particular **exceptional service** to the community (e.g. first school in the community, oldest independent school, contribution to special education, upliftment of the community, etc.)
- d) The school's survival under difficult circumstances (e.g. the South African War, forced removals, role in the struggle for democracy, natural disaster, etc.)
- e) A past learner or educator who has distinguished themselves (must be mentioned by name and deceased for at least 20 years)
- f) Schools that have been closed, but nevertheless played a significant role in education.

4.2 Schools may find that they qualify for more than one category, but they need to choose the ONE that best indicates what they are most proud of. A school can only be awarded ONE blue plaque, so the choice of category should be considered carefully.

5. **Applications for 2020**

5.1 The closing date for submissions is **22 May 2020**.

5.2 Applications should be made electronically via email by using the application form provided (Annexure A) and submitting it to principal@centreforconservation.co.za.

5.3 Hand-delivered and postal applications will also be accepted, as long as they are received before the closing date. These applications should be addressed or delivered to: **The Principal, Centre for Conservation Education, 9 Aliwal Road, Wynberg, 7800.**

6. For more information, contact the principal of the Centre, Sigi Howes, on tel. no. **021 762 1622**.

7. Kindly bring the contents of this minute to the attention of all schools in your district.

SIGNED: HA LEWIS

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: INSTITUTION DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION

DATE: 2020-03-18

**BLUE PLAQUE SCHOOLS PROJECT
2020 APPLICATION FORM**

Please return to principal@centreforconservation.co.za

Closing date: 22 May 2020

School: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal code: _____

Tel: (021) _____

Email: _____

We hereby wish to apply for a Blue Plaque in the following category:

(Even if more than one category applies to your school, please choose the ONE that best describes what your school is proudest of. You may mention the other category/categories in the motivation. Maximum 400 words)

1. The age of our school (over 125 years)
2. Architecturally significant building
3. School's exceptional service to the community
4. School's survival under difficult circumstances
5. A past learner or educator (mentioned by name; no longer living; 20 years deceased)
6. A school that has closed and been lost

Our motivation is presented over the page.

If we could select the final wording on the plaque, we would like it to say:

(Maximum 25 words)

Our choice of language is:

(please select a maximum of two; if you want to have the plaque in two languages, then the wording limitation of 25 words must include both languages)

English Afrikaans Xhosa Other (please specify: _____)

Should we be successful in being awarded a Blue Plaque, we commit to:

- displaying the Plaque on the front of our school, nearest the entrance;
- collecting the Plaque from a mutually agreed place;
- putting up the Plaque ourselves;
- allowing the organisers and their workers access to the school in order to affix the plaque if we are within 10 km from the Centre for Conservation Education;
- informing our learners, parents and school community about the awarding of the Plaque;
- arranging a 'handing-over' ceremony at which learners will also be present
- taking care, to the best of our abilities, that the Plaque is not damaged, vandalised or stolen.

We wish to be considered for one of the two annual free Blue Plaques donated by the heritage organisations in the following areas: Cape Town & Drakenstein

We are able to pay the full cost of the Blue Plaque (R 1 800-00 – R 3 000)

Name of contact person (please print):

Signature:

Name of principal (please print):

Signature:

Date:

Our motivation is as follows:

(Maximum 400 words. Please list the sources of this information, as it will have to be verified by the organisers. You may attach a maximum of 5 photographs if you feel they give weight to your application).