



Betty's Bay Ratepayers Association (BBRA)

Newsletter January 2026



Welcome to the first newsletter of 2026. We hope that this new year will be a peaceful and fruitful one and we wish the 15-member committee, under the chairmanship of Amund Beneke, much success in all its endeavours. The list of the committee members may be found on the home page of our website: <https://bettysbayratepayers.co.za>.

Input from the committee follows:

CONSERVING OUR LEASE PROPERTIES: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Betty's Bay is a unique coastal village, celebrated for its natural beauty, biodiversity, and strong sense of community. Many properties in our area are held under **lease agreements**, and the long-term sustainability of these properties depends on careful stewardship by all leaseholders. Conservation is not only a legal obligation but also a commitment to future generations.

Below are key steps and best practices to support the **conservation of lease properties** in Betty's Bay.

The Betty's Bay Ratepayers Association (BBRA) remains committed, as always, to protecting the unique natural ecological, and cultural heritage of our village. Many properties in the Betty's Bay fall under leasehold conditions, which place specific responsibilities on leaseholders to ensure responsible land use & conservation.

To support compliance and promote sustainable stewardship, we outline below the key steps to follow for the conservation of lease properties:

1. Understand Your Lease Conditions

Leaseholders should familiarise themselves with the specific terms and conditions of their lease agreements. These often include requirements related to:

- Land use and development limitations
- Environmental protection
- Maintenance obligations
- Restrictions on clearing natural vegetation

Understanding these conditions helps prevent unintentional non-compliance.

2. Protect Indigenous Vegetation

Betty's Bay forms part of a sensitive ecological area within the Kogelberg Biosphere. Leaseholders are encouraged to:

- Preserve indigenous plant species
- Avoid unnecessary clearing or landscaping
- Rehabilitate disturbed areas with locally indigenous plants

Healthy vegetation reduces erosion, supports wildlife, and maintains the character of the area.

3. Control Invasive Alien Plants

Invasive alien species pose a major threat to local ecosystems. Leaseholders should:

- Regularly identify and remove invasive plants
- Dispose of plant material responsibly
- Work with neighbours and community initiatives for coordinated clearing

Collective action is far more effective than individual efforts.

4. Practice Responsible Building and Maintenance

Any construction, renovation, or structural maintenance should:

- Comply with municipal planning regulations
- Minimise environmental disturbance
- Use materials and designs that blend with the natural surroundings

Always obtain the necessary approvals before undertaking work.

5. Prevent Soil Erosion and Water Pollution

Simple measures can significantly reduce environmental damage:

- Maintain natural ground cover
- Use permeable surfaces where possible
- Prevent runoff of chemicals, detergents, or waste into storm water systems

Clean soil and water are essential for both human and environmental health.

6. Fire Awareness and Preparedness

Fire is a natural part of fynbos ecology, but uncontrolled fires are dangerous. Leaseholders should:

- Maintain defensible space around structures
- Remove excess dry vegetation responsibly
- Follow fire regulations and seasonal restrictions

Preparedness protects lives, property, and ecosystems.

7. Engage with BBRA and Local Authorities

The BBRA works closely with conservation bodies and local government. Leaseholders are encouraged to:

- Attend BBRA meetings and information sessions
- Stay informed about environmental guidelines
- Report environmental concerns or non-compliance

Active participation strengthens our collective voice.

8. Foster a Culture of Conservation

Conservation is most effective when it becomes a shared value. By educating family members, tenants, and visitors about responsible behaviour, leaseholders help protect Betty's Bay's unique environment.

In Conclusion

The conservation of lease properties in Betty's Bay is a shared responsibility that requires awareness, care and cooperation. By following these steps, leaseholders not only comply with their legal obligations but also contribute to preserving the natural heritage that makes our community so special.

As many of you might know, the Bettys' Bay Ratepayer's Association was privileged to secure a lease agreement with the municipality for erf 4030, which is zoned for recreational & open spaces for the next nine years, including Crassula Hall (erf 2416).

We will take responsibility for the conservation of the leased land and ensure that the space is developed for the community by the community so that it will be utilized responsibly and with the appreciation of our biosphere.

Together, we can ensure that Betty's Bay remains a place of beauty, balance and sustainability for generations to come.

Elsa Stofberg

BETTY'S BAY EMERGENCY SUPPORT TEAM (BEST)

As the BEST team took a well-earned break in December, the report recording incidents and call-outs in December and January will be presented in the next BBRA newsletter.

An important reminder to all, please have your medical aid information, a list of your current medication and medical history at hand as this greatly assists with patient assessments and handover to the ambulance services. We urge people to prominently display both the Erf number and street number on their property so that they can easily be found, particularly at night.

Any donation to BEST will be most welcome as we have ongoing expenses and may also require a new patient vital signs monitor (R75 000). Donations can be paid to ABSA, Betty's Bay Ratepayers account 4066616439, Branch 632005, with BEST as the reference to ensure that your donation is used solely for our purpose. Fortunately, we have a number of spare patient monitors which have been kindly donated.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed. Without your support we would not be able to provide this service.

The Emergency Number for BEST is 066 165 6061. Please save this number on your phone or have it readily available.

Rob Boyd

And now for news from other organisations in and around Betty's Bay which have a very positive impact on our village and on the people of our village:

WILD FIRES IN THE KOGELBERG BIOSPHERE AND THE IMPACTS THEREOF

The Kogelberg Biosphere, like much of the Western Cape, has once again been severely impacted by wildfires. This year, fires began long before the official start of the Overberg fire season on 1 December. And we're now only halfway through the season.

According to the Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association, tens of thousands of hectares have burned across the Overberg since October 2025.

According to Corlie Hugo, CEO of the Kogelberg Biosphere, the frequency of these fires is a major concern. "We know fynbos must burn, but it's vital that it doesn't burn too often. Fires that are too frequent destroy young plants before they've had a chance to set seed, which can lead to local extinctions.

In hot, dry conditions, animals caught in fire zones are unlikely to survive – succumbing either to intense heat or thick smoke. And even for those that do escape, the aftermath presents new challenges. Normally, as vegetation recovers, animals move back into burnt areas from surrounding natural habitat. But when so much of the landscape is affected, where does that recruitment come from? This is deeply concerning. For the animals that do survive – and for those indirectly affected – there needs to be a place of safety where they can recover before being released back into the wild.

This is where the Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue & Training Centre plays a critical role. Most recently SPCA officials rescued a number of tortoises and snakes from the Stanford fire, all suffering from burn wounds. They were quickly taken to local vets in Kleinmond and Hermanus for emergency treatment and then transferred to the centre for additional treatment and care.

Michelle Watson, Rehabilitation Specialist of the Wildlife Rescue & Training Centre, says community support has been invaluable. "We're incredibly grateful to local residents, firefighters and everyone across the Overberg who has gone out of their way to help rescue wildlife during these fires. We're doing everything we can to care for these vulnerable animals – but we can't do it alone. We're calling on the community to assist once again, whether by volunteering their time or donating to help us source enough food and medical supplies for our patients."



Corlie adds that wildlife surviving the fires will now be hungry and thirsty, and may move into towns and gardens in search of food and water – with these towns playing an increasingly important role as a habitat for animals. She says, "Having a fynbos garden is an ideal way to provide support to these species naturally. Your garden in effect acts as a corridor for wildlife."



Residents with gardens or green spaces can help by putting out shallow containers of water, with a rock placed inside to prevent smaller birds or mammals from drowning. It's also good to keep this clean, by regularly replacing the water.

If you would like to support some of the fire victims at the Kogelberg Biosphere Wildlife Rescue Centre please consider making a monthly donation via our website – www.kogelbergbiosphere.org.za, or donate you time by helping out at the centre – contact Michelle Watson – 060 861 5653.

Corlie Hugo

HANGKLIP COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE



HCCC provides welfare services to the Hangklip community, i.e. residents of Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay and Rooi Els. After closing for the holidays in early December, food preparation and other services resumed on 12 January this year.

After a well-deserved break, our semiweekly Pilates classes, weekly Bridge afternoons and monthly Friendship Circle meetings kicked off in January again.

Following on from our HAIL (Home Assisted Independent Living) home carers' courses in October 2022, March 2023 and May 2025, we have set up carers' support groups in each of Sunny Seas, Jock's Bay, Central Betty's Bay, and Silversands.

If anyone would like to know more about our activities and the work that we do, please contact our chairman, Colin Cook, at myrna.colin@gmail.com.

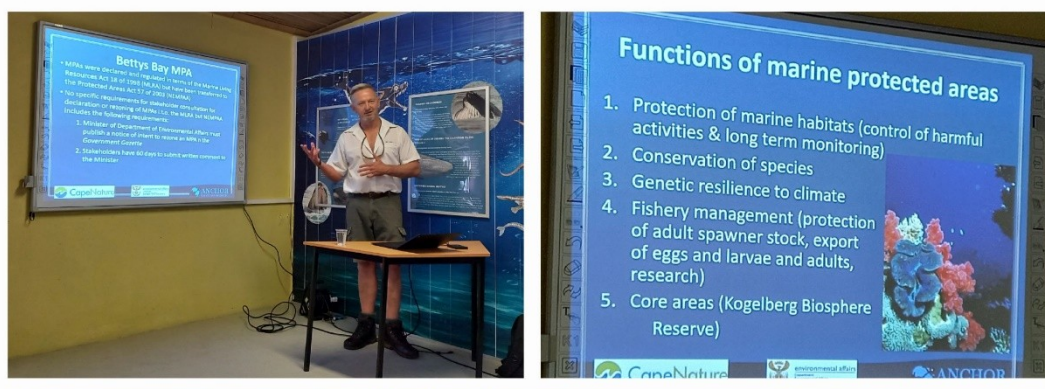
If anyone would like to volunteer to assist with any of our activities, or if anyone needs assistance from HCCC, please contact Marion Green at manager@hccc.co.za.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, friends and supporters a peaceful and blessed 2026 and we look forward to being of service to you again this year.

David Fritz



BBC4thSATURDAY: 25 NOVEMBER - THE MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA) IN BETTY'S BAY



Thanks to Pierre de Villiers of CapeNature for his very interesting and informative presentation on the MPA in Betty's Bay.

Initially, the Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998 was used to declare and regulate MPAs. Later this became function of the Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003.

It is easier to observe what happens in terrestrial protected areas, such as nature reserves, than in MPAs. Some activities in MPAs occur underwater and though they are less visible, they negatively affect the biodiversity in the MPA. Activities like illegal kelp harvesting, poaching, fishing with nets, stripping bait off the rocks, marine animal entanglement in fishing nets, line or litter and by-catches of birds in fishing nets are visible and their impact is more obvious.

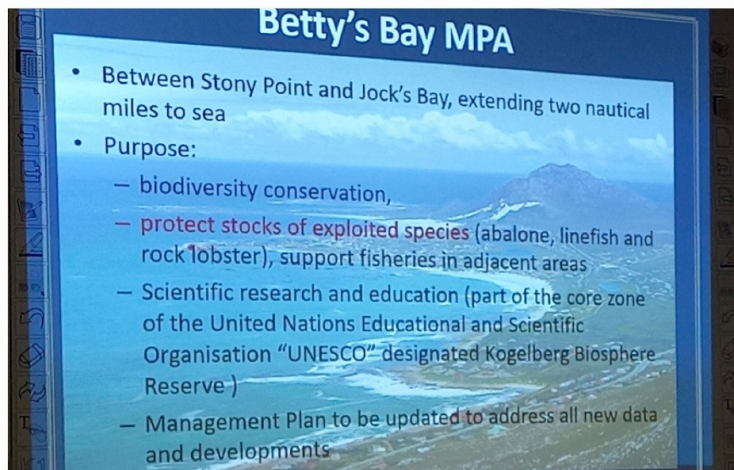
Currently, shore-based angling is permitted as well as non-consumptive uses such as SCUBA, tourism business and passage by vessels. Fishing or spearfishing from vessels is not permitted. As we know too well – there is widespread illegal harvesting of abalone and rock lobster in the Betty's Bay MPA. The MPA in Betty's Bay is part of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. It lies between Stony Point and Jocks Bay, and extends two nautical miles out to sea.

Two of the functions of an MPA are to protect marine habitats and conserve species.

One aspect that still needs to be addressed is the conservation of all parts of the ecosystem. As the Betty's Bay MPA is a core zone of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, it should be a "no take" zone.

The positive news is that from 2026, there are plans to update the management plan of the Betty's Bay MPA in order to increase protection of the biodiversity. The BBC supports this plan for the MPA.

Carol Clark



BAKKIES IN BETTY'S

In late November, we were graced with a visit from a young male southern elephant seal. He first made his appearance on Silversands main beach. That lasted a day before he went to the Sea Farm Beach. One day there and back to Silversands. The novelty of his visit seemed too much for him and he finally made a decision to try the much less trafficked beach opposite Die Eiland in central Betty's Bay.

With an area cordoned off and a team of dedicated volunteers, he was assured some relative tranquillity to undergo his annual moult. The moult cycle usually involves a period of fasting for 3-4 weeks as he sheds his old skin and fur before regrowing a new pelage. He changed from a fat, blubbery blonde, through a very scraggy phase as his fur shed in clumps, to an all-black, somewhat leaner individual, until his new hair began to appear.



By day 35, he was visibly thinner having lost most of his reserves from fasting and his neck, pelvis and shoulder blades were clearly visible. His fur had grown back, still relatively dark (particularly on his back) and he left.

Photo: Pete Oxford

We bade him a fond farewell and hoped we may see him again the following year. We were fooled as he turned up back at Sea Farm for a few days and then on to Pringle Bay. Day 49 was the final report! It was a long stay and far longer than was expected from previous elephant seal visits to the Western Cape.

At approximately three years old Bakkies does not yet have the characteristic elephant seal snout and is only half the length of his full potential which may see him growing to an incredible 4000kg! Let's hope he makes it.

Currently southern elephant seal colonies in the Sub-Antarctic Islands are being ravaged by bird flu, accounting for a massive number of adult deaths:

Bird Flu Wiped Out Nearly Half of the Females in the World's Largest Elephant Seal Population, Drone Images Suggest <https://share.google/s5DKFpXjHbBHJrJDL>



Photo Copyright: Alexa Todd-Mason
Pete Oxford

PENGUIN-PALS SIGNAGE UP FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The peak holiday season brings a large influx of local and international visitors to the Stony Point Seabird Colony.

In an attempt to help educate visitors on how to minimize stress on the penguins, the BBC Penguin-Pals developed an updated VISITOR INFORMATION leaflet. We created a sign with a QR code that links to the full leaflet on the BBC website. This saves on printing leaflets and reducing paper waste.

In conjunction with CapeNature, we selected six strategic sites in the colony. Thanks to Graham Clark, who secured the signs to existing poles or wooden fencing at these sites, namely at the two access paths off the carport, at viewing spots and the start of the boardwalk. We hope that visitors will scan one of these signs! The current laminated signs are temporary and they will be replaced with signage material in 2026.

At the entrance to Stony Point, we secured a larger sign below one of our 2023 BBC "SLOW DOWN, Penguins crossing" signs.



We mounted and framed the leaflet and placed three copies outside the On the Edge Restaurant, facing the outside seating area and at the toilet facilities. We also secured a copy to the glass doors at the entrance of the Eco Venue.

A reminder that the CapeNature signage at the entrance indicates **that no dogs are permitted in this Nature Reserve complex**. If you see people walking their dogs in the colony, you can refer them to this to this sign.



Carol Clark

OYSTERCATCHERS BREEDING SEASON

New Chicks on Main Beach

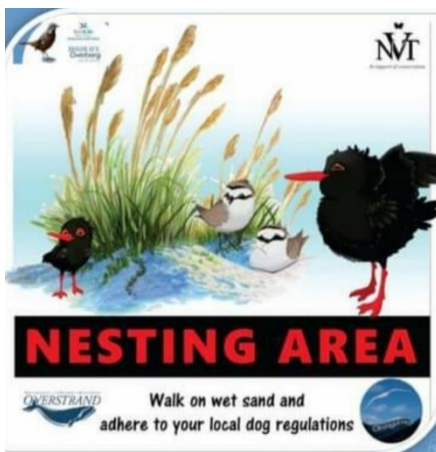


16 December: Exciting news! Our first two African Oystercatcher chicks have hatched on Main beach. The hatchlings are only a few days old. The same pair of Oystercatchers successfully raised one chick to fledgling last season. (The miracle chick on Main beach.)

At this stage they are vulnerable and in danger from kelp gulls, crows and off leash dogs.



Please keep dogs leashed and keep a fair distance from the birds and their nesting sites, which are marked by signboards and stakes.



Please be aware and listen to the adults "alarm calling", which increases with intensity when agitated. It is my impression that more people are walking their dogs leashed than seen previously, which we appreciate.

From the pictures, it is clear that kelp plays a vital role in their survival. Chicks hide in the kelp from danger and predation and kelp provides essential foraging.

UPDATE: 30 December:

Despite the many challenges and crowds on our beach, we are happy to report that both chicks are now two weeks old and maturing nicely.



Their appearance differs from the previous photos - their grey mottled feathers are more defined and they have a dark-tipped bill, compare to the bright red-orange of the adult. The eyes are still dark, unlike the bright red eye ring of the adult. Their appearance provides effective camouflage against their environment.

The adults have moved their chicks closer to the rocks as this makes it easier for feeding.



They rely on parents for food for several months while their bills grow stronger to forage for shellfish by themselves. The chicks are very robust now and follow the adults to the water.

They are ground nesting birds, vulnerable to predators and hide in the sand and kelp.

Dogs off leash remain their biggest threat.

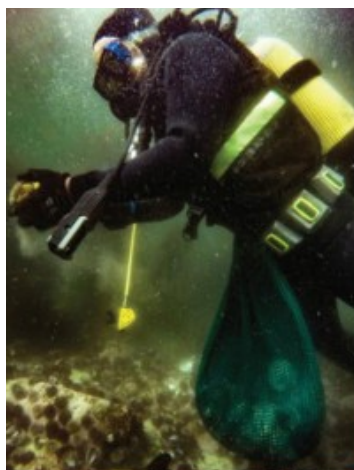
*Lenore and Duncan Watermeyer, Betty's Bay
Oystercatcher Monitors*

UPDATE: THE PROPOSED RECLASSIFICATION OF DRIED ABALONE TO CITES 11

A brief recap from the last newsletter:

There was an application for South African perlemoen (in its dry form) to be reclassified to CITES Appendix 11 at the COP 30 meeting in Brazil

CITES is: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora



Our perlemoen (*Haliotis midae*) is endemic to South Africa. Its wild population has been severely affected by illegal fishing, driven by well-connected organized crime syndicates.

- The illegally poached perlemoen are exported in a dried form and it is for this that a CITES Appendix 11 reclassification is being sought.
- Almost all (90%) of the exported perlemoen goes to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, with 98% of the dried perlemoen being air-freighted there.

The significance of achieving a re-classification for dried perlemoen to CITES 11 is that trade in the product will be subject to permits and documentation, which specify product source. As the Hong Kong authorities strongly enforce these regulations, it is hoped that reclassification will help to reduce the

illegal trade of this threatened species.

What happened at the COP 30 meeting in Brazil?



A well-documented proposal, following wide public consultation, to uplist the dried form of perlemoen to a CITES Appendix 11 listing was due to have been proposed at the CITES COP meeting being held in Uzbekistan. The proposal was supported by a large and costly South African delegation, which included the DFFE Deputy Minister Narend Signh. This delegation, at the last minute, withdrew the plan without offering a public explanation. Bafflingly, Thobile Zulu-Molobi, spokesperson for the DFFE has stated that the reasons for the withdrawal will be given once there is more clarity on certain issues!

It is widely believed that a major reason for the withdrawal is due to the appointment of a new Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Willie Aucamp. The previous Minister Dion George was a strong supporter of the proposal and he has publicly stated that he believes he was fired because of his stand against illicit wildlife trafficking. The withdrawal of the proposal took place less than two weeks after his abrupt removal.

The chair of the Abalone Farmers Association of South Africa, John Heckroodt, has welcomed the withdrawal of the CITES proposal. He maintains that if one form of abalone (in dried form) is controlled it will affect the sale of the other legal forms (fresh and tinned stock) as buyers will believe all forms are now controlled! It seems commercial considerations are more important than long-term species sustainability! <https://southafricanabalone.co.za/>



Abalone Farmers
Association of SA

Analysis released by TRAFFIC, a global network working to ensure trade in wild animals and plants is legal and sustainable, estimates 67% of abalone exported from South Africa since 2000 was illegally harvested. An estimated 4000 metric tons were poached in 2024. TRAFFIC stressed that any CITES listing would complement internal steps to tackle the illegal trade as regulations requiring full traceability for every abalone consignment leaving the country would be required.

This story is ongoing but does not reflect well for the wild perlemoen populations which are being decimated by illegal poaching. It is likely that the species may collapse in heavily poached areas, especially considering they undergo 'broadcast spawning', where gametes are released synchronously, en masse. This process requires a sufficiently high *density* of perlemoen to ensure that egg and sperm are able to unite once cast into the water column.

Tony Bush and Pete Oxford

BIOSPHERE LIVING IN BETTY'S BAY

For those who have not seen the first draft of the 10 paged "Biosphere Living" booklet from 2024, here is the link. Please share it with any family, friends, neighbors, tenants or holidaymakers to help spread the word about "living in a biosphere".

<https://bettysbayconservancy.co.za/biosphere-living-on-your-holiday-in-bettys-bay/>

**"BIOSPHERE LIVING"
ON YOUR HOLIDAY
IN BETTY'S BAY**



If you love being in nature and spending time at the beach, on the mountains or at the lakes, then Betty's Bay in the Kogelberg Biosphere is a great place for a holiday. Perhaps you have come to relax, curl up with a book, watch the sunrise, sunsets and the stars, see the penguins or go birdwatching in this beautiful and peaceful place. Maybe you prefer to have an active holiday where you can walk, run, cycle, swim, canoe or hike. Betty's Bay offers all these opportunities.



We would like to make you aware of some "biosphere living" information to make your stay and that of your neighbours, both human and wildlife, a more pleasant and safer one for all.

FANTASTIC FYNBOS

Betty's Bay is situated in the transitional zone of the Kogelberg Biosphere. This area is often known as the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom and has a vast biodiversity of beautiful fynbos species. This natural vegetation is also home and habitat for our wildlife.



WONDERFUL WILDLIFE

Betty's Bay has a rich variety of wildlife such as grysbok, baboons, genets, porcupines; reptiles such as tortoises, chameleons and snakes; interesting insects and many beautiful sea and land birds. Please don't feed,

interfere or disturb the wildlife - they are not pets.



Snakes

They live here too. There is no need to kill one if you see it. If you need help to have a snake removed from your house, contact a snake handler:

Mike Green Betty's Bay	082 2125116
Michele Watson Rescue Centre	073 3140674
Johan Westland Kleinmond	066 4995087



BE AN R44 LIFESAVER



GO SLOW

PLEASE JOIN THE DRIVE TO MAKE OUR ROAD SAFER

The holidays are here!

We welcome you to the beautiful Kogelberg Biosphere. Thousands of holidaymakers and visitors will travel the R44 to visit this area, often speeding to get somewhere.

TOO MANY tragic car and motorbike accidents happen on the R44

TOO MANY animals are killed crossing the R44

It is one of the most scenic roads in the world, so rather slow down and enjoy the amazing views.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday



THE R44 TASK TEAM,
KOGELBERG BIOSPHERE



Why the rush?

SPEEDING IN BETTY'S BAY

Sadly this year there have already been incidents of the deaths of wildlife hit by vehicles. Please help us to spread the word to "Drive slower" to keep our wildlife safe and alive.

It is such a beautiful place to spend a holiday and in which to reside, why the need to speed?

If you are doing a spring-clean of your home, please remember that The Butterfly Effect repurposes the most amazing variety of goods for community and animal welfare!



The Butterfly Effect is a dedicated group engaged in community and animal welfare and can repurpose a host of things from your household that you might otherwise throw in the trash

Wood & sheeting
Wood, roof sheeting and off-cuts are used to build kennels for distribution to those who need it most.

Hardware & building materials
Windows, frames, build-in cupboards, security gates, doors, half tins of paint, tiles, sinks, etc. are used to help people upgrade or repair their homes.

Scrap metal & appliances
Working or not, it can be repaired to sell or recycled.

Outside gates, poles & fencing
Help unchain dogs in townships and improve their living conditions.

Pet food, etc.
Leashes, collars, harnesses, bowls, blankets, food, carriers, beds, kennels, etc. are mostly distributed to responsible pet owners and the meds are taken to our vet and animal sanctuaries for welfare treatments.

Feeding scheme
Most expired foods can still be used for dogs and very little is actually thrown away. A few human feeding schemes are supported by distributing sealed jars, packets, canned foods, sauces, etc.

Furniture
Transport can be arranged.

Stationery
Donated to schools.

Toiletries
Even half-used.

Recycling

- breadbags are used to package dry dog & cat food for distribution
- bread tags are sent to Elsies River for a church project called "Bread Tags for Wheelchairs"
- plastic bottle tops are forwarded to the NG church and Kleinmond Primary School for their initiatives
- small plastic sauce containers are used for cat pate
- yoghurt, margarine and ice cream containers are used for cooked dog stew

Food scraps
Food scraps are used to make stew for dogs and pate for cats. This can include unused vegetables, peels, frost bitten meat, or even bones and left overs from the braai, as well as left over foods like stew, rice, pasta, etc. Raw and cooked food needs to be separated, please, and unfortunately can't include potato peels, onions or garlic as these are not healthy for dogs.

Bric-a-brac
Unwanted household items like linen, curtains, material, knitting & crafting stuff, bric-a-brac, pots, pans, clothing, books, tools, gardening equipment, etc. are sold to fund vet bills and sterilisation days.

Feel free to contact Natalie at 082 883 0580 or Sandra at 073 169 8400

THE LAUNCH OF THE BETTY'S BAY BOOK: 20 DECEMBER



The launch of the Betty's Bay book was a festive community event in the beautiful Harold Porter Gardens. The Nirvenia Hall was full and overflow seating was provided outside. This 640 page colour coffee table book is a celebration of Betty's Bay and "captures the spirit of Betty's Bay in a book".

It contains so much fascinating information on many aspects of our village and lots of interesting and fun stories about residents past and present.

If you missed the opportunity to pre-order the book or buy it at the launch, they are now available at the Bookshop in the Harold Porter Gardens and at Coffee on Clarence for R750.



Bottom left: Stella Stofberg, the layout artist of the Betty's Bay book



The Editorial Team: Tim Attwell, Karon Scholefield, Liezl Krige, Skip Krige (Coordinator), Carol Clark and Patrick Boltler. Alta Krige, Skip's wife, was also a vital member of the team.

UPDATE ON ERF 4032 CRASSULA WAY

This large erf in Crassula Way was the site of the proposed retirement development.

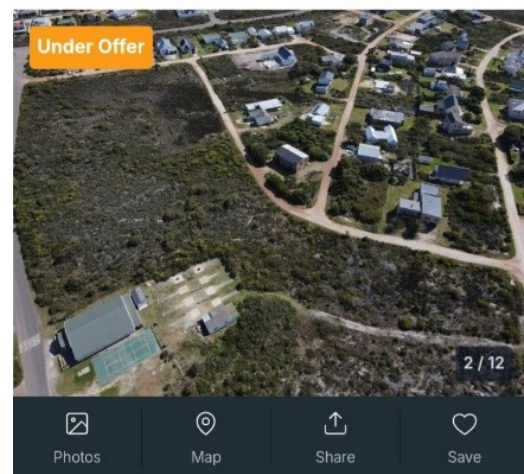


No planning application was received by the Overstrand Municipality and the advertising signage was removed from the erf.

Subsequently the Erf was put on the market for sale at R10 Million. Shortly thereafter, an "Under Offer" status was indicated. The latest update is that the erf

has been sold as a commercial property to someone in the retail industry.

Carol Clark



R 10 000 000

HACKING - The Battle for Betty's Bay: Report on Hack No 742 on 3 January 2026



Twenty-one volunteers attended on an overcast and humid day to remove New Zealand Christmas trees of all sizes from the dense fynbos on the northwestern side of Bass Lake (Malkopvlei). It was most encouraging to have such a good turnout so early in the year when many people still have friends and family visiting. Melanie van Greunen and her sons Cameron and Hilton were welcomed to their first Betty's Bay Hack, and it was good to have Tommy Mills back after a three-month stint in Mauritius.

The hackers outdid themselves as all the NZ Christmas trees were cut, poisoned, dragged and stacked at the corner of Edward Avenue and Bass Road by the 10am break. So much for

taking things easy at the start of the year!

Thanks as always to Dave Mourant who each month provides all that is needed for a good cup of tea or coffee – table, boiling water, cups, teaspoons, tea bags, coffee, sugar and milk. A big thank you to Mary Whitelaw and Lee Boyd for sponsoring and making their customary egg mayo and cheese & cucumber sarmies and to Christine Coupar for the packet of biscuits which was left over from the December hack. Clearly, people were underfed at Christmas and New Year as not a crumb remained. After refreshments the hackers cleared 350m of the Bass Road verges starting at Edward Avenue and moving eastwards, some braved the extremely dense and high fynbos on the northern shore of Bass Lake. Loads of Australian myrtle, huge Australian tea bushes, a few rooikrans and a bottle brush were all dealt with.



The aftermath was enjoyed by all on the grassed area on the western side of the lake. This was a wonderful start to the hacking year with amazing volunteers who really don't need supervision. Everybody finds his/her niche and seamlessly gets the job done.



Our thanks to Magda and Tommy Mills and Chris Geldenhuys for joining us from Pringle Bay and Christine who crosses the Palmiet River to join us from Kleinmond.



As ever, on behalf of the Betty's Bay Fynbos, thank you all for your efforts.

Rob Boyd

Convener Betty's Bay Hack Group

SUPPORTERS OF THE KOGELBERG BRANCH OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Wishing all the supporters of the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society a prosperous and fun filled 2026. May the fynbos of the Kogelberg Biosphere enthrall you even more this year and may your volunteering work for the Kogelberg Branch bring you many, many rewards.

The Southern Cape and Klein Karoo are definitely experiencing a severe drought situation at present (10 Jan) with Knysna reported to only have twelve days of water supply left before the taps run dry. Even in the North Boland and Overberg things are very dry at present and just a little bit further afield the Klein Karoo, Montagu, Ladismith, Calitzdorp, Oudtshoorn have severe water shortages with farmers having to transport water onto their farms for their animals.

The current situation has developed very quickly. In July we still thought we were fine water-wise, but now even the Overstrand faces the very real prospect of water restrictions in the not-too-distant future.

Now that the new year has begun, all facets of the Kogelberg Branch will be fully functional, and it is all go for the new year.

HAROLD PORTER NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

In my opinion the gardens are not in a great state at present. The most encouraging thing is that the lawns have all been mowed and the new ride-on mower that was repaired with funds donated by the Kogelberg Branch is working very well.

The Garden remains very dry. A new borehole pump has been installed on the borehole but this pump appears to be too strong a pump for the reticulation system in the gardens and there have been a number of pipe breakages. It takes up to four days to get the pipe repaired and no sooner than it is repaired then there is another breakage so sections of the gardens really suffer from lack of water.

Through the Friends of the Harold Porter Gardens, we will continue to do what we can towards the maintenance of the gardens.



WEATHER

As stated earlier in these minutes, it continues to be very dry with a total of 29mm of rain recorded in December.

Since I have been keeping rainfall records (2015 – 11 Years), this is the fourth driest year since 2015. Only 2015, 2017 and 2022 recorded lower rainfall figures.

Betty's Bay Rainfall 2015 to 2025					Harold Porter National Garden							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Average
Jan	42	74	77	47	45	93	17	7	54	24	33	47
Feb	28	23	18	54	27	38	30	19	85	31	24	34
Mar	28	132	23	62	119	13	187	41	173	34	43	78
Apr	14	71	26	88	34	51	12	32	68	137	27	51
May	56	35	6	90	71	67	263	90	263	31	153	102
Jun	134	167	119	157	104	161	213	212	277	133	202	171
Jul	246	144	110	84	195	168	211	91	126	391	195	178
Aug	134	110	148	188	67	196	193	119	89	219	111	143
Sep	29	104	51	113	140	100	33	44	232	71	61	92
Oct	71	33	72	28	12	84	124	14	65	30	28	53
Nov	45	12	140	59	61	127	69	25	38	38	7	61
Dec	18	32	10	21	61	39	125	89	34	26	29	46
Annual Total	845	937	800	991	936	1137	1477	783	1504	1165	913	1058
*To Date (10 Jan)												

HAROLD PORTER BOOK AND CRAFT SHOP

The shop continues to perform well, and we are very happy with the December results which show a 62% increase in turnover over December 2024. The shop was very busy in the last two weeks of December and first ten days of January. If our January, February and March sales can equal those of last year, our turnover for the year will be 40% up and gross turnover in excess of R2.5m.

We continue looking to stock new items and for ways to encourage increased sales. I am personally very proud of what the shop is achieving.

At the end of January 2026, Janet Nel will have been with us a full year and what a difference she has made to the shop. She has taken a great workload off Paddy and my shoulders, she has done all the bookkeeping meticulously, she has taken over 90% of the ordering, which she has handled very competently, and has worked hard at display and sales in the shop.

Many, many customers have said that they so enjoyed Janet's welcoming smile and helpfulness and that it was a pleasure to shop in the shop.

A big thank you, Janet, from all of us but especially from Paddy and me.

LAUNCH OF THE BETTY'S BAY BOOK – BETWEEN MOUNTAIN AND SEA

This has come and gone and it was a great success. One must admire what Skip Krige and his helpers managed to achieve in less than one year. Yes, the book has its mistakes, but it is a wonderful historical and anecdotal book about Betty's Bay.

The launch was attended by over 250 people and, I believe, on the whole we coped with the crowds quite well.

Those who do not have a book yet, you had better visit the bookshop quickly! Skip had 800 copies printed and there are now less than 30 left for sale. I cannot see a reprint being done in the very near future. This book was a big financial loss to Skip, which he bears with a smile but on behalf of all of us, a big, big thank you, Skip Krige. You are a legend!

FRIENDS OF THE HAROLD PORTER GARDENS

Great news is that the first gardening session was on Tuesday 13 January followed by the first Thursday session on 22 January. There is so much work to be done in the gardens and I am encouraged by the

enthusiasm of the gardeners to get going. Good luck to Viv von der Heyden and Jenny Pattinson and all the gardeners in their endeavours to improve the maintenance of the Harold Porter Gardens.

KOGELBERG GARDEN CIRCLE

The Garden Circle will hold its first meeting on Friday 20 February. Venue still to be announced.

Convenor: Galia Manicom Cell: 082 963 3804

Galia also is very prompt in getting members to help rescue plants before they are bulldozed over. See below.

HACKS

Betty's Bay Hack: The monthly hack takes place on the first Saturday of each month. See Rob's report above.

Next hack Saturday 7 February.

Convener: Rob Boyd 082 567 8858

Hangklip Hardcore Hackers: Chris Geldenhuys says that the approach this year will be the same as last year - to achieve the overall goal which is to stop or prevent the influx of aliens into the precious biosphere reserve. Everything we will do this coming year will be measured against this principle. To Chris and his dedicated team of hackers, a big, big thank you.

Convener: Chris Geldenhuys 082 900 8299.

Pringle Bay Hack: This hack takes place on the last Saturday of the month.

Convener: Chris Geldenhuys (082 900 8299).

Rooi Els Hack: The Rooi Els Hack takes place on the second Saturday of every month.

Convenor: Mike Christelis Cell: 082 467 2795

CREW

The Kogelberg Crew Team continues to do wonderful work in searching for endangered or near endangered species and recording their numbers and locations. It all helps with conservation of the fynbos in the Kogelberg Biosphere.

A big thank you to Adele Scheepers for representing the branch at Crewe and for all the work that she does.

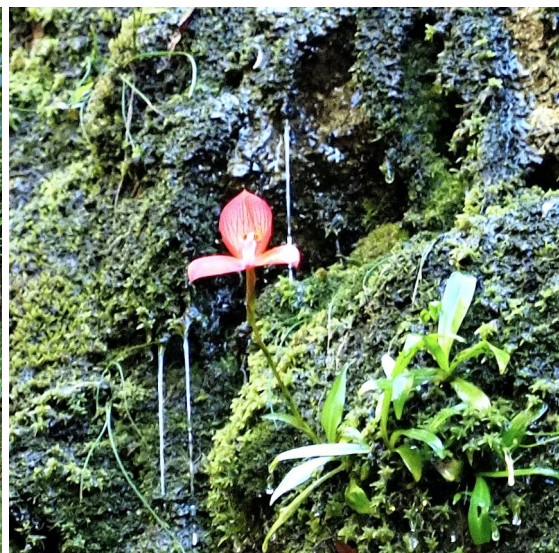
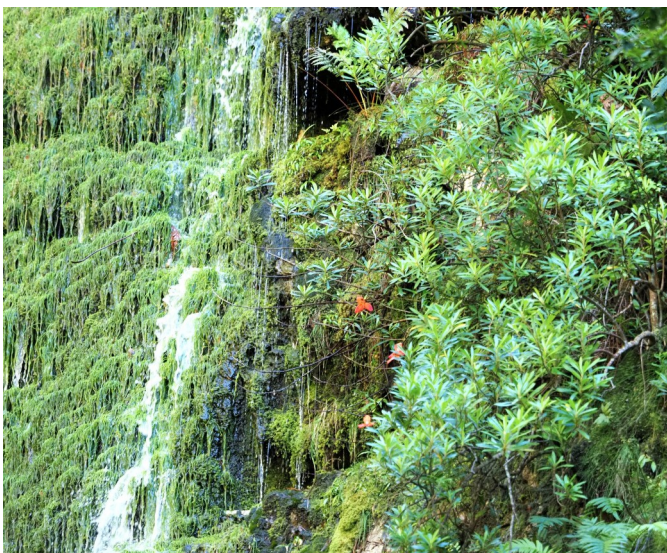
MONTHLY TALKS

At the monthly talk on Saturday 17 January Tony Cunningham delivered a talk titled: "Angola Biodiversity (Botany, Butterflies and Birds).

Tony built on a point namely: "Biodiversity does not exist in a vacuum – it has a human face that governs the success or failure of intervention". He discussed the challenges that lie ahead where new species are literally being discovered just as their habitats have been destroyed. Tony also considered what options there are for conservation in Angola in the future.

KOGELBERG BRANCH MONTHLY WALK

The monthly walk took place on Saturday 17 January 2026 - an enjoyable hike up Leopard's Kloof to see the red disas currently flowering in the gorge.



CONCLUSION

2026, I believe, is going to be an exciting and hopefully rewarding year for the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa. There are many plans that we intend putting in place and as they all come to fruition it will only strengthen the branch and enable us more than ever to fulfill our goal of being the leading plant conservation organization in the whole of South Africa.

As I walk through the fynbos every day, not only do I realize how privileged we are to live in this beautiful environment but also realize that we have a huge responsibility on our shoulders to preserve what we have for future generations. Our aim must be to conserve and preserve the fynbos and all the ecology that goes with the fynbos so that we leave it in a better state than we found the biosphere when we moved into the area. This is a huge challenge but one that I know the Kogelberg Branch will not shy away from. We may not get it perfectly right, but no one must be able to point a finger at us and say "but you did not give it your best, trying to conserve the fynbos."

It is great to be up and going again and we look forward to all the activities of the branch in 2026.

Peter Dall

082 784 4326

Email: peter@pdconsult.co.za

KOGELBERG GARDEN CIRCLE & FIGHT FOR FYNBOS - *Stop, before you chop!*

Living here is like living in a nature reserve, surrounded as we are by the world-famous Cape floral kingdom. But as more plots are being cleared for housing, precious fynbos is fast being lost. That's where **Fight For Fynbos** steps in.

Who are we?

Fight For Fynbos is a volunteer sub-group of the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society. **With prior permission from owners and builders**, we rescue fynbos from the house and driveway footprint. We also encourage landowners not to clear the entire plot, but to conserve a portion of their plot. In fact, the Overstand Municipality guidelines recommend that $\pm 40\%$ of the plot be left in its natural state, something that not many people seem to know.

So, if you hear of a plot about to be cleared, please, please contact us **before excavation begins**. Our cheerful "Fynbos Fairies" will arrive, spades in hand and save what they can, while sharing their knowledge and hard-earned experience about gardening with fynbos.

Every rescued plant helps preserve our biodiversity and the special sense of place that drew us here in the first place.

Contact: Galia 082 963 3804

How wonderful it is to see a house surrounded by the natural vegetation, the garden an extension of our world-renowned fynbos biome, rather than a house surrounded by barren green lawns or sterile, heat-producing brickpaving. Thank you, Galia and team, for helping to preserve our biodiversity through replanting and propagating the many plants that you have saved from destruction and for helping to educate homeowners and new-comers to our village. (Ed.)



Sadly, a spectacle to often seen in our village.

KLEINMOND ANIMAL WELFARE



Over the festive season we received twenty puppies brought in from members of the public who had bought them from children. Sadly four were extremely ill and had to cross the rainbow bridge.

In conjunction with Law Enforcement, we were able to track three children. After much persuasion they informed us that there were two ladies in Proteadorp who were breeding specifically for selling. As you can understand, the children were reluctant to tell us who these women were for fear of getting into trouble. These children were enticed from the informal settlement, told to sell these little pups for between R100 to R150 and in return they would receive R10.00 for each puppy sold. We are currently trying to locate these women.

If you or your visitors are approached by children selling puppies, please ask to see the pups, tell the children that you are calling Law Enforcement and bring the pups to KAWS. We will ensure that the puppies have a full medical check and are adopted into the kind of home that they should have had at the start.

If anyone would like to volunteer at KAWS, please email Karin manager@kaws.co.za

Should you wish to make a donation to KAWS our banking details are:

YOCO PAYMENT LINK

<https://pay.yoco.com/kleinmond-animal-welfare-society>

Kleinmond Animal Welfare Society

FNB Hermanus

Account number: 62689636458

Reference: Name



Karin de Beer

And that is all for this month, folks! Should you belong to any other organisation or group that does good work in Betty's Bay, please send me the details thereof. Likewise, if you have an original article that would be of interest to our readers, please email it to me on vivvdh@gmail.com.

*Warm regards
Vivienne von der Heyden
Editor*