

KINGSWOOD BUZZARD

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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From the CEO

Another year has
come and gone –
and what a year it
has been!

This year was not without its challenges and obstacles to overcome, but there have also been many great accomplishments. And I believe 2023 will present more opportunities for growth for our wonderful estate.

Our estate has grown substantially this year, with 41 new homes completed and another 23 still under construction. Phase 4 has proven to be extremely popular, with four homes having been completed 20 under construction, and many more building plans having been submitted for construction to commence in 2023.

The average price of homes in Kingswood has grown again, year on year, and property investment at Kingswood now outperforms most other forms of investment. With all the possible growth opportunities, the future growth in property values at Kingswood is looking extremely promising.

There is much excitement throughout the estate with regard to the proposed new Community Centre/Clubhouse development, and you will find a short update on page 6 of *The BUZZard*. A quick reminder to all our homeowners that the town hall meetings are proceeding at 17:30 for 18:00 on 12 and 13 December at the King George Protea Hotel. Please support this event if at all possible.

We concluded a comprehensive tender process in September where a new landscaping contractor, Turfworx,

was selected to provide the estate with landscaping services for the next five years. I am very excited about the many improvements that homeowners will see on the estate as a result of the new service level agreement with Turfworx. See an introduction to the new team on page 10.

The process relating to the implementation of various security upgrades and improvements throughout the estate has reached a stage where more comprehensive information will be provided to homeowners. As part of the process, an expert consultant, Scholtz Consulting, was appointed to drive the process further and to ensure that all the envisaged improvements are implemented within the prescribed timeframes and budget.

Throughout the year, horticultural and operational changes and improvements were made to the golf course, and currently the course is in the best condition it has been for many years. Our dedicated course management and maintenance staff are to be thanked for this. Despite the devastating drought that we are currently experiencing, the course is ready for the December season onslaught. We hope to see you all on the course soon.

I would like to take a moment at the end of the year to thank all of our homeowners for the role you have played in the past year to make Kingswood one of the most sought-after estates in the Southern Cape. Thank you for your commitment to the Kingswood brand, and we look forward



to serving you with great enthusiasm again next year.

I also recognise that without the contributions made by our HOA operational and admin staff we wouldn't be where we are, and I am very appreciative of this ... thank you.

May this holiday season bring along many more joys and cheers for you and your family, and may this Christmas mark a perfect end to the year and fill your homes and hearts with eternal joy.

Wishing all a merry and blessed Christmas.

Kingswood greetings

Willem Jacobs





Artist's rendering of proposed Community Centre

KINGSWOOD HOA

Update on Community Centre/Clubhouse

KGE Trustee Jonathan Witts-Hewisson, at the helm of the subcommittee charged with making Kingswood's clubhouse project work, kindly provided an update on the eve of town hall sessions scheduled for mid-December to inform residents of progress.

Following the last Kingswood AGM in September, the trustees – and, in particular, a duly appointed subcommittee – have been working towards the progression of an architectural layout and design of the new community centre.

This process has now advanced sufficiently to permit homeowners to make an informed decision as to whether or not the proposed project should proceed.

To that end, the task was undertaken to appoint a project manager and a team of appropriate consultants, including architects and engineers, to take this process forward.

Says Jonathan: 'The next step in this exciting project will be to present the proposed facility, and the costings pertaining thereto, to homeowners during town hall information meetings, to be held on 12 and 13 December.'

Because of complications regarding the availability of the Kingswood Gatehouse facility on those dates, the town hall meetings will be held at Protea King George Hotel, which is conveniently close to Kingswood.



Artist's rendering of proposed Community Centre

Three-dimensional representations of the proposed facility have been circulated to homeowners, by email, before these meetings, and additional information will also be made available during the town hall sessions.

Timing is everything

'If homeowner approval is obtained at a general meeting in January 2023, then we will proceed with the preparation of

more detailed plans, so as to permit the appointment of a contractor,' explains Jonathan.

'After the contractor's appointment, it is expected that the construction phase will take between 15 and 18 months. In other words, we will be hoping to complete construction by the third or fourth quarter of 2024.'

What's the point?

As introduced in the previous edition of *The BUZZard*, the emphasis of this project will be the creation of amenities and treats for the KGE community. Lounge and related facilities, for the exclusive use of homeowners and their guests, are envisaged.



Proposed location: view from Community Centre deck





Proposed location: north-facing views



Proposed location: east-facing views

The plans include provision for a proper pizza oven, a barista bar, a play area for young children, and an open stretch of lawn to the north of the patio. Can you picture it yet?

Players won't play second fiddle

Golfers, rest assured that you have not been forgotten. Significantly improved facilities for golfers to enjoy after playing a round at Kingswood will be part and parcel of the new community hub. These include a suitable clubhouse and bar area, while proper showers and changing rooms will now become available for the first time.

'Halfway house facilities will be available, and it is expected that the overall golfing experience will be enormously enhanced,' says Jonathan. These improvements should make

'Obviously, facilities will also be created for golfers – including a suitable halfway house – but these will not detract from the requirement that homeowners and their invited guests be able to enjoy the privilege of exclusive facilities,' says Jonathan.

'A proper kitchen and restaurant are provided for, which will hopefully encourage regular use by a great number of homeowners and their families. They can take full advantage of the magnificent northern view from the relevant site, where north-facing facilities will also be available for the exclusive use of homeowners,' he says.



Proposed location: west-facing views



Proposed location: south-facing views

Kingswood a much sought-after golfing destination for those visitors who are amenable to paying commensurate fees for a world-class experience.

Let's be realistic

Jonathan and his fellow subcommittee members had their work cut out when it came to determining what facilities ought indeed to be included in this development. 'Homeowners will recall that, following the discussions which took place at the AGM, various communications and reports relevant to this project were circulated. In that process, homeowners were invited to express their views as to which preferred facilities might be made available.

'Numerous contributions were received, for which the trustees are most grateful. Given the constraints faced, firstly from a location perspective, and secondly from a cost perspective, it was necessary to carefully evaluate what could realistically and affordably be achieved.'

Jonathan says it was necessary to guard against including features that may not be used on a regular basis. In addition, it was felt that it made sense not to replicate any

facilities that are available adjacent to Kingswood, or which are presently under construction in the immediate vicinity of the estate.

'We also considered the fact that certain proposed amenities might more suitably be accommodated when the Gatehouse is repurposed, in due course,' he explains.

'We therefore chose to focus on facilities that would offer an improved experience for the vast majority of homeowners of all ages – and, of course, being a golf estate, facilities that would prove to be fitting for an estate such as ours, so as to significantly enhance the golfing experience at Kingswood.'

One sure thing is that this planned Kingswood community hub is something extremely positive for residents of the estate, and all HOA members are urged to keep abreast and get involved.

Please diarise 12 and 13 December for the town hall sessions that will put you in the loop.

Turfworx

Kingswood now home turf for this multi-awarded maintenance crew

Pinnacle Point Estate

When the South African Landscapers Institute dished out their coveted SALI Awards this year, one Southern Cape-based company raked in a great many accolades for work done at some of the Garden Route's most prestigious estates and golf courses.

Not only did Turfworx earn bragging rights for gaining seven SALI Awards in a variety of categories for work done at several local estates, but two of these were top trophies, countrywide: their labours at Thesen Islands earned them Best Landscape Maintenance '22, and their input at Pezula's putting/chipping green landed Turfworx this year's prize for Best Specialised Turf Construction. Did we mention that this was 'countrywide'?!

'We were approached by Willem Jacobs in July this year to prepare a presentation for the maintenance of Kingswood Estate,' says Turfworx CEO, Danny Maritz. 'It was a great privilege for us to be appointed on 1 November as the elected company responsible for KGE's maintenance.'

Impressive worx history

Turfworx was co-founded by Danny in 2007 – a full two decades after he commenced his career in the horticultural industry in 1987 at the City Council of Pretoria, while studying Parks and Recreation Management through Technikon RSA. In 1996, Danny was recruited by TurfTek as a contract manager.

He went on to become regional director for the golf division at Servest Turf, where he had 11 golf courses under his care.

In the years since establishing Turfworx in George, Danny has successfully completed a ream of industry-related courses, such as a National Certificate in Sports Turf Management, UCB Groundsman Certificate, National Certificate in Turf Irrigation, and a Certificate in Turf Pest Control at Tshwane University of Technology.



Danny Maritz, front left, and his Turfworx team share an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complexities and required standards of top estate and golf facilities

Danny's experience includes the fields of Golf Course Budget and Financial Management, Golf Course Construction, Design and Project Management, Nursery Production (Malanseuns Nursery), Fertilising and Pest Control, as well as Training and Management of Staff.

As a member of BIGGA International (the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited), one of the Turfworx team's earliest accomplishments was during the 2010 Soccer World Cup, when they were responsible for the construction and maintenance of three home bases.

'We are operational across the Southern Cape and currently maintain Pezula Golf Course, Oubaai Golf Estate, Welgelegen Estate, Earls Court, Thesen Islands and Knysna lifestyle estates, and now Kingswood Golf Estate,' says Danny.

At the helm

According to Danny, Turfworx stalwart Hannes van Niekerk and his team are already hard at work on the extensive Kingswood property. The majority of this team comprises personnel who worked with the previous contractor, so for them it's familiar territory.

The rest of Danny's management team is Sanet Maritz (estate divisional director horticulture) and Abri de Kok (division manager estates). 'Our team brings a total of 80 years' experience to the table, with emphasis on the maintenance of estates and golf courses,' he says.

'The group's core purpose is the rendering of services to world-class standards, using modern technology, the best equipment, and innovative methods for the benefit of our clients and the pleasure of all those who use our facilities.'



Oubaai Golf Estate



Pezula Private Estate



Thesen Islands

What's on the slab for Kingswood?

Turfworx plans to improve all high-profile areas, such as the estate's main entrance, to kick off operations at KGE. Explains Danny: 'Our initial focus is to do a thorough clean-up, including the pruning of trees, shrubs and plants in need of immediate attention. There is also a great need for new plant material, which we will grow and nurture in the nursery. Our management has very high expectations, and all possible resources will be used to bolster our efforts of ensuring that Kingswood becomes one of the jewels in our crown.'



Newest member of the Kingswood HOA team, financial manager Marina Flear, at first thought she was cut out to be a teacher. But she has long since exchanged the classroom for the competitive field of business, and recently scored a top job at KGE.

Dawn of a different calling

Marina says her family moved to the beautiful town of George when she was 12 years old. After having matriculated at Outeniqua High School, she headed for Stellenbosch, where she attained a BCom Financial Accounting degree before completing her Postgraduate Teaching Certificate.

'Coming from a family where mom and dad are both teachers, it was a natural choice. I started my teaching career in Springbok in the Northern Cape,' she says, adding that she moved a little closer to home during her second year of teaching, when signing up for a job at Knysna High School.

'But I realised this was not the career I pictured myself in for the next 50 years.' So Marina made the bold move of tackling her SAIPA (South African Institute of Professional



Accountants) articles at George audit firm PKF, while pursuing an Honours degree part time.

But wait, there's more! Marina completed further studies and articles in 2011 and then worked for the audit firm Michaelides Parker Kretzmann Inc. in Knysna for five years. When finally moving back to the Southern Cape capital, another five-year audit firm stint – this time with Boshoff Visser Inc. – preceded her brand-new opportunity at Kingswood Golf Estate. She officially took on the task of KGE financial manager on 1 November.

What a team!

When chatting about what her new job entails, colleagues on the KGE team, and factors that prepared her for the position, Marina is full of gratitude and praise.

'I must thank and compliment the HOA team, from CEO Willem Jacobs to Dan, Lize, Mornay, Ivan and Caron, who is currently standing in for Masadi. They have welcomed and accepted me as part of the team – especially Lize, who has been showing me the ropes with so much patience.

'I enjoy working with people and "blame" my high school accounting teacher (whom I loved!) for inspiring me to choose this profession. I think, initially, teaching was a bit of a comfort-zone decision for me, but I don't regret the experience at all.'

She says her position as office manager and senior accountant in Knysna went a long way towards honing her people skills, while also teaching her to manage and plan workflow. 'At the firm in George, these skills came to good use when I had to manage a team, review output, and start a monthly work department.

'I was also closely involved with the training of article clerks, where my teaching background came in very handy. I firmly believe that no experience is in vain, whether good or bad.'

Job at hand

Marina's current occupation at Kingswood entails ensuring that both the HOA and the property company are compliant with regard to all financial statutory requirements, and that all necessary policy and procedure documents are in place and being implemented with regard to finance and procurement.

'I receive lots of assistance from Willem, who has the legal background. This work ensures that the financial information recorded is accurate and correct to simplify the audit process and the compilation of the financial statements.'

Further tasks include assistance with the annual audit, compiling working papers, compilation of monthly management reports for trustees to review, submission of VAT returns and, in future, will also comprise the salary function.



The twins, a cuppa and a nap, in that order

While these tricks of the trade all lie close to Marina's heart, there's another double delight that makes her wake up with a smile ... no matter what time of the day or night.

'My twin boys, Johan and Luan, were born in 2019 and they're the best thing that's ever happened to me. Although they are quite a handful (I'd hoped the terrible twos would have passed by now), they are my absolute pride and joy. I love them to bits and really enjoy spending time with them.'

Friends and family are very important to Marina, who says she's truly blessed to have her parents living right here in George – and it doesn't hurt that the twins absolutely adore their Oupa and Ouma.

'I don't have a lot of time for hobbies between work and the kids. So when I do get a free moment, a cup of coffee with a friend or an afternoon nap is my most treasured go-to.'

Priorities? Checked!

Here's wishing Marina a productive and enjoyable working environment at KGE.



Team Kingswood after their shared victory at the 2022 Handicaps League Final

Since last catching up with Liesel Niehaus, Mike Quinn and their able Kingswood Golf Operations (KGO) team, there's been lots of action on and off the course. Space at our disposal won't allow for the inclusion of details on each of the past months' successful golf days and related events, but read on for a summary of highlights and bragging rights earned.

Team Kingswood own their tie

During the 2022 Handicaps League Final, played under the auspices of Southern Cape Golf and hosted by Pinnacle Point in Mossel Bay, Team Kingswood came to the party with aplomb.

After the semifinals on 1 October, the teams from Kingswood and George Golf Club drew the Handicaps League Final after being tied 4.5 to 4.5 and having to extend to a sudden death playoff which was halved, resulting in a tie of the championship. Congratulations to all players involved!



Visiting golfer Richard Lubbe shared these pics, along with an awesome review of the KGE course



'Best round ever!'

Some things in life are within one's control, but much of our mortal coil is spent at the mercy of factors far beyond our control. Let's take social media: for all its practical purposes and communication facilitations, there's no getting away from the fact that these platforms give free rein to public opinions best left unsaid.

A scathing review by disgruntled clients or guests can do untold damage to your business, no matter how false or outrageous its claims. On the flipside, when a glorious testimonial of your offering goes viral, there's no match for the mileage gained.

KGO was recently the recipient of such unsolicited, if well deserved, kudos when visiting golfer Richard Lubbe waxed lyrical about his experience on the Kingswood course, sharing it with the universe via Google.

'Played my best ever round of golf here!' raved Richard, and continued: 'Stunning course and not too pricey, either. I really enjoyed the course layout (with two quarter-way houses) and the scenery was also beautiful.

'The greens were well kept, and the fairways were good. The bunkers are very tricky to get out of, but luckily I didn't land in any of them. Definitely a must-play. I'll be back for sure.'

Adding to the awesome social media feedback recently received was this Facebook post by Derek Alberts on 20 November: 'We discovered a hidden gem of a course on the Garden Route today ... Kingswood Golf Estate. What a beautiful find!'

Ladies at Home on Kingswood course

The annual Ladies at Home days hosted by selected Garden Route golf courses are highly anticipated and hugely supported ladies-only events on the local golfing calendar. This year was no exception, and the Kingswood Ladies Golf Committee produced a stunning event from beginning to end.

Every lady who participated was a winner because of the incredible vibe, the delicious food, and amazing prizes for the taking. Hats off to main sponsor of the day, Michelangelo Hair Salon and Dry Bar, with added spoils by Skinitute and Beula Beauty House.

All proceeds of the day went towards Phambili Refuge for Battered and Abused Women and Children. During a happy gathering on Wednesday 2 November, a handful of Kingswood Ladies members had the privilege of handing over a cheque to the value of R8,500 to Phambili representatives Hester Greeff (chairperson) and Coleen Stoffels.



Happy participants in the recently returned Member Guest event



Wendell Bossenger earned this year's Kingswood Club Champ crown

calendar on Saturday 19 November – and boy, was it worth the wait!

Kingswood Club Captains Ymke Schutte and Elizma Joubert really proved themselves with their input and initiative, ensuring that this year's event was one to remember. The format of the day was Betterball Stableford and the theme was Mexican Fiesta.

All golf club members and their guests were spoiled with an impressive goodie bag that included a branded mint green golf shirt. Fun was had throughout the day by everyone who participated.

Brand-new champ

The annual Kingswood Club Championships took place during the last weekend of October. Congratulations to Wendell Bossenger for being crowned 2022 Kingswood Club Champ.

Impressing members and their guests

Member Guest is traditionally the most prestigious golf event of the year, when the club gives back to existing members and shows off what Kingswood has to offer to potential new members. After a two-year hiatus, the Member Guest event returned to Kingswood's golfing





Golf ops ladies: Phambili Women's Shelter representatives Hester Greeff and Coleen Stoffels receive a fat cheque from Kingswood organisers of this year's Ladies at Home golf day

Book now for the festive season

All golfers on the estate are urged to secure their seasonal bookings for December and January as soon as possible, as the tee sheet is filling up at a rapid pace.

Reserve your rounds by calling the Pro Shop on 0861 72 71 70.

Alternatively, email golf@kingswoodgolf.co.za or bookings@kingswoodgolf.co.za

www.kingswood.co.za for additional information.





How you can deal with bullying on estates

Get on top of bullying now

Bullying is a worldwide problem, and estimates show that every year more than a billion children experience some form of violence, particularly in school. But bullying doesn't only manifest in the school environment.

Bullying is becoming a concern in residential estates, with a growing number of exasperated parents reporting the incidents to estate managers. If you're a manager who has experienced an increase in the reports of bullying on estates, you're not alone. But what's the best way to manage this?

Here Dean McCoubrey, founder of MySocialLife, which teaches modern life skills at schools, offers some advice on how this intergenerational problem can be addressed.

Proving it

One of the most difficult things to do when it comes to bullying is proving that the action occurred, particularly if it's verbal abuse. 'It's hard to prove because often victims are fearful and they are scared to talk for fear of repercussions because they have been so traumatised. In some cases, they think they are in the wrong or that there is something wrong with them.

'Bullies are also very good at hiding their intimidation. Even if estates have cameras, from the recordings of which you would potentially be able to tell if a bullying incident occurred, bullies would be able, depending on their age, to know how to make sure that they are not in view of the cameras. So, this is why it's always hard to prove,' says McCoubrey.



Besides having cameras up, and ensuring that all areas are well lit, McCoubrey also recommends making security staff aware of the incidence so that they can also help to be the eyes and ears on the ground and provide witness statements.

Prevention is better than cure

McCoubrey says that the best way of tackling abuse is to create an environment and culture in the estate that doesn't tolerate such behaviour.

He explains: 'That culture normally comes from good leadership. Culture is so important. Look at countries and companies that get this right. They create the right environment and an understanding. They have leaders or executive committees that highlight what it is they stand for.

'This is the same at schools – the good ones have a policy and it shows what they stand for. If there's a chink in the chain, you will have a problem because it's very easy for manipulative people to find it and abuse it. You need clear guidelines and policies on the estate that highlight what the estate is willing to put up with and what it won't.'

Have a complaints procedure in place

McCoubrey recommends having a good, transparent complaints procedure in place so that parents and residents can highlight their concerns and come forward to report incidences.

'You need a way to investigate and evaluate complaints – just like companies and schools do. In general, my experience of bullying is that it's incredibly hard to track and prove, and as a result there are no consequences. Bullying is insidious and creeps around, and not many of us understand it.

'But you need to make sure that you understand the importance of mental health and being able to speak to the community about this. I understand that's a big ask of estate managers. But you must ensure that residents can be a part of the solution. You will need bullying solutions. Schools attend to bullying in several ways, but ultimately the first thing to do is to prevent it, then to monitor it so that there can be evidence. If that fails, having someone come in to teach modern life skills consistently can be an important solution,' says McCoubrey.

Invitations to experts to speak about life skills and behaviour can be extended to include wildlife and environmental experts to discuss behaviour towards the estate's wild and domestic animals.

When to get the police involved

You need to get the police involved when it's physically harmful, repeated and ongoing, says McCoubrey. 'But you need to have proof. When it comes to cyberbullying, it's important to take screen recordings of it. Unfortunately, if you don't have the proof, it's going to fall on deaf ears as the very limited resources within the police will not take it seriously.

Wildlife Management Plan



Wildlife Management Principles and Guidelines - Dr Christiaan Johannes Blignaut

The dynamics of a game population and the management of herd health and size can become quite complicated, especially in a unique setup such as Kingswood Golf Estate. It is therefore important to bear in mind that a set of basic principles, rather than a strict programme, should be followed to manage and maintain the wildlife population on the property.

Species – Springbok

Habitat

Prefer open grassland. Will mainly graze on grass, but also forage on leaves. They are adapted to arid regions and therefore not water dependent, getting most of their required water from their food.

Sex ratio

- ideally a ratio of 15 ewes to one ram.
- A too high ram percentage will affect serving frequency, due to competition among males that will lead to energy and time wasting.



- A too low ram percentage will lead to decreased motivation to serve, as well as a possible shortage of suitable male replacements.

Age ratio:

- 30–40% young animals is ideal.
- Too many old animals will lead to a decreased reproduction rate.

Reproduction:

- Breeding season: All year
- Gestation period: 165–180 days

Population growth:

Initially population growth will be slow, but will then go into an exponential growing phase, before reaching a plateau/equilibrium.

The level at which the herd reaches a plateau is carrying capacity. This level is called 'K' on a normal S-shaped growth curve that can be expected under most conditions.

K is determined by age and sex ratio, social structures, food availability and quality, shelter, prevalence of disease, predation and hunting.

The growth rate of a herd can be determined:

Births per 100 members – mortalities per 100 members = growth percentage, for example $31/100 - 8/100 = 2.5\%$

When harvesting from a herd, removing less than or up to half of the 'K' value (therefore never more than half of the animals in a herd) is ideal.

Habitat:

- Plant species composition and structure are important.
- Springbok prefer certain species (grass or succulents) above others, but are generally very adaptable.
- The structured density of vegetation affects herd size. The less dense the vegetation, the larger the herd size, while in a more dense setting they will split into numerous smaller herds.
- As they are a plains species, they normally thrive on golf courses.

Social structure:

- Will affect the distribution of springbok in the area.
- Herds consist of juveniles and ewes with one or several larger dominant rams.
- The dominant ram will chase young rams away and will defend a territory.

- Younger males will then become solitary or form bachelor herds.

Body condition:

- Should be assessed regularly to gauge herd health.
- Roughly classified into three groups:
- Good: 'Round' appearance
- Reasonable: 'Angular' appearance, but ribs and hip bones aren't prominent.
- Poor: 'Angular' appearance with prominent ribs and hip bones. Should be addressed.

Poor condition may be due to several factors:

- Poor veld/grazing condition
- Unsuitable plant species composition
- Social stress
- Overpopulation
- Systemic disease or injury

Species – Bushbuck

- Rams are larger, often darker in colour and have horns.
- Normally a secretive species, but may become tame and lose their fear of humans.
- Rams should not be approached by humans or dogs as they are nicknamed the 'little buffalo' due to their aggressive nature and tendency to attack invaders with their sharp horns.
- Ewes and juveniles may be found in small family groups, but rams are solitary.
- Bushbuck are mainly browsers, but will eat some grass.



Caracal (Stock image)

- They prefer dense bush and are dependent on permanent, clean water.
- Calves are born throughout the year and are hidden in dense vegetation for the first few days after birth. Inhabitants and visitors should be warned not to disturb calves that may appear to be abandoned.
- Bushbuck are territorial but normally move around and are not easily contained. They will crawl under or jump over fences or walls, and are often injured when attempting to cross barriers.

Species – Caracal

- Very secretive and mostly nocturnal. Unlikely to be seen often.
- Prey on small to medium-sized animals, reptiles and birds. These may include small antelope, hares and poultry. It is advisable to keep cats, rabbits and even toy-breed dogs indoors at night if caracal are known to be active in the area.

- Mostly solitary but may be found in pairs.
- Only dangerous or aggressive towards humans if cornered; will rather flee if allowed to.

Species – Porcupine

Female porcupines are, on average, about one kilogram heavier than males.

Life expectancy is 12–15 years in the wild.

The white-and-black crest of spines and quills can be erected at will to make the animal look enormous and threatening. Some spines on the tail are hollow and make a rattling sound when shaken. The very sharp spines and quills come off when touched by a predator or are shaken off, but they grow back rapidly.

Porcupines cannot 'shoot' their spines/quills out at an attacker. They also do not have an aggressive nature and normally only act in defence, when cornered or attacked by dogs and other predators.

African porcupines are mostly vegetarian, using their strong digging claws to get roots, tubers, and bulbs. They are also fond of fallen fruits and will sometimes gnaw on bark. Gardeners beware: arum lily bulbs are known to be a favourite.

They normally sleep during the day and feed at night. The African porcupine is primarily nocturnal, although it may be seen during the day.

They often take shelter in caves or antbear holes. They also build dens, which can be up to 20m long with a 2m deep living chamber.



Porcupine (Stock image)

Species – Cape Clawless Otter

The African clawless otter is primarily aquatic, and is found near water bodies that are permanent to the region. Their habitat comprises savanna and lowland forests, while the water they prefer is shallow (about 150cm deep) with thick reed beds. These areas are home to the prey favoured by the otter, namely crustaceans and fish.

When they do go onto dry land, they usually conceal themselves under rocks or vegetation, or in burrows.

The African clawless otter hunts day and night and, while it does favour an aquatic environment, it eats prey from both the land and water. Common menu items include crabs, fish, rodents, amphibians and even birds.

Apart from human threats, the only predators with which this otter needs to battle within its aquatic environment are Nile crocodiles and fish eagles. On land, of course, they are more vulnerable to predators.

Otters are not naturally aggressive, but have been known to scratch, bite or, in rare cases, drown dogs. This type of behaviour is normally only seen as a last resort of defence.

Dr Christiaan Johannes Blignaut, BVSc, George Animal Hospital, 044 874 4259



Cape Clawless Otter (Stock image)



LOCAL N lekka

'Life comes first, the rest will follow'

Charl Marais has been a Kingswood homeowner for seven years, and MD-cum-majority shareholder at PPP (Precast Panel Products) since the beginning of 2022 ... and he's not had the time or inclination to ever look back.

His connection with George comes a long way, says Charl Marais, who moved here with his parents and three siblings in 1984. Dad was headmaster of George-Suid Primary School, and Charl matriculated from Outeniqua High in '87.

The Marais clan is a productive bunch and, since having retired from education, Charl's father has been involved in the promotion of Garden Route tourism activities in the form of the ever-popular Outeniqua Power Van and Diaz Express. Mining the area's many tourism offerings and making it accessible to visitors is also a priority for Charl.

The family faced tragedy this year, however, when its youngest member lost her battle with cancer, aged 43. 'When standing next to a loved one's death bed, you realise you can't take anything with you,' he says.

Charl is married to Vivia and has three kids: Nina, 23, Evert, 19, and 16-year-old Reniel.

Learning the ropes

After completing his BCom at Stellenbosch, Charl started his career in George in the employ of SARS from 1992–94. Bigger horizons beckoned in Cape Town, where he worked for Coopers & Lybrand's consulting division. 'My focus was on finance at the time, with an early introduction to IT,' he says.

By the new millennium, he had been consulting on BEE, structured finance, turnaround strategies, and the like. But Charl was set on attaining his MBA, so that's what he did through Australia's Bond University in 2001–02.

Moving northwest

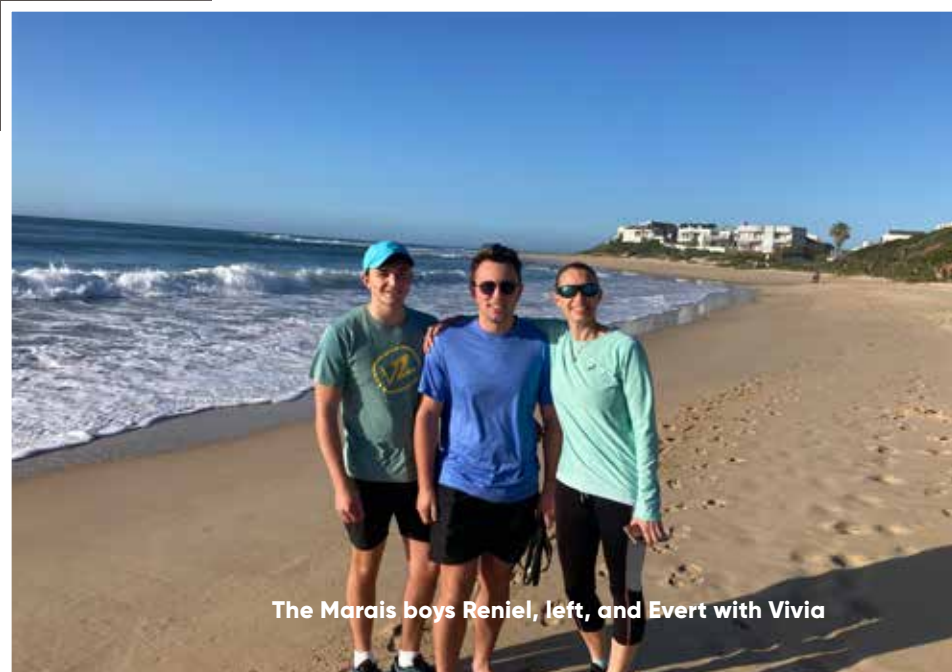
Fast-forward to 2008–09, with Charl living in the Cape and commuting to Joburg and surrounds to monitor various companies in his care. When the frequency of travelling stopped making sense, the family Marais moved to a nature estate at Hartbeespoort Dam in North West Province.

'In 2012 I had the opportunity to become MD of a ready-mix concrete business in Rustenburg that was majority-owned by WBHO. Its shareholders' intention was to grow the business and then sell. We went from 11 to 18 plants, and sold the lot to PPC in June 2016.

'One of our iconic projects at the time was supplying Eskom's Kusile power station with over 600,000m² of concrete. The biggest single project I've been involved with is the Mall of Africa construction, where 100,000m² of concrete came into play,' says Charl.

Many other highly technical ventures and challenges presented themselves at the time, but commuting was always part of the package, so by 2014 it had become practical once more for Charl and his family to return to the Western Cape. The only decision now was: Cape Town or George?

The latter won; the Kingswood plot was bought in January 2014, and the Marais family – wife Vivia and their two boys – moved here in October 2015.



The Marais boys Reniel, left, and Evert with Vivia



Vivia and Charl Marais



Team PPP at their plant in George Industria

'I commuted for another six and a half years, being in George during weekends only. Those 48 hours at home always flew past too fast,' says Charl – another contributor to his current/forever permanent-resident status.

Always keen to try his hand at different investment opportunities, Charl smiles when remembering one of these initial experiments. 'I bought a fish and chips shop ... bad investment! I sold it after six months. Then, during those weeks spent at home during Covid lockdowns, I had to ask myself: is this really worth your while?'

Charl finally resigned from the big-city industry last year. 'I didn't have anything but faith and prayer. But knowing a bit about concrete, I had lots of ideas and plans.'

Double-tiered triple-P

PPP was founded in 1980, with Vibracrete walls its primary business at the time. Today, the company comprises two sections: the PPP where Charl ploughs his vast experience into the product side, and PPP Building, which deals primarily with construction and developments.

On the manufacturing side, PPP specialises in Vibracrete walls, lintels, curbs, stepping stones, LPS (large panel security) walling, Green Blocks, and paving on a smaller scale. At peak periods on certain projects, the staff



The PPP offices are situated at 29 Binne Street, across the road from Steel & Pipe

contingent pushes 22, but averages out at about 18 staff members in general.

'I decided to buy in as main shareholder in February this year. My attention is shared between products and development, in all cases focusing on getting the basics in place and building new networks. I can't say no to a challenge and, with concrete and steel, your imagination is the only limitation.'

Passion to plough back

Charl says he's not interested in just working, but also in making a difference in the community where he has now



Charl's best view of Kingswood

Restart, refresh

Charl says their first experience of estate living was in Hartbeespoort where, as is the case at Kingswood, residents could enjoy the space and freedom of a safe environment. 'Security is key, and we got used to the luxuries of estate living.'

And while enjoying all that Kingswood offers in terms of safety, good management, and spectacular mountain views, Charl has never been more serious about impacting lives and business in general. 'People say CAW signifies Cold And Wet, but it also stands for Call And Wait.'



Concrete tables and tile against a wall at Outeniqua High's new Agricultural Centre

'It's annoying when a supplier tells you to call them again next week. If there's anything I've learnt up north, it's service now or opportunity lost. Yes, we're more relaxed here, but I'm a firm believer in excellence. Don't ever forget about a client.'

Check out precastpanelproducts.co.za for additional information.

finally settled, as opposed to dashing in and out of town. And what better way than through the Garden Route's many tourism offerings?

A keen sportsman, he used to spend lots of time running but now prefers mountain-biking or tackling Kingswood Estate's trails on foot. When it comes to golf, he says he doesn't play 'often enough or well enough' – but that didn't stop him from twice being the driving force behind local golf festivals to promote the area's many award-winning courses, with big-business sponsors to boot.

Along with like-minded friends, he steered the FNB national golf festival from 2005–07, with 1995 winning Springbok rugby captain Francois Pienaar hosting the 2006 edition of the event. He gained sponsorship from The Pro Shop for another multi-course Garden Route tournament between 2017 and 2019.



Supporting Kingswood's events



Stock image of padel court

Update on Telesto Tennis Centre

Padel courts are open
and ready for the holiday
season

In the previous edition, readers of The BUZZard were introduced to Jonathan Hills – the developer of Telesto Clay Court Tennis Centre at Rooirivier. If you missed that story, the nutshell version is that the centre is being constructed over a number of phases, the first comprising the establishment of padel tennis and clay courts, a pro shop, and refreshment stop. Future phases will include the construction of a clubhouse, gym, studio training facility and players' lounge, as well as ATP-sized hard courts. And now, on top of all that excitement, another player enters the stage ...

Jonathan's passion and commitment to the sport is clearly on display when he talks about his ambitions. 'Clay tennis courts are a significant innovation in the world of tennis, and many South African players struggle to go pro as they never have the experience of practising on such courts.

'Our courts will be open to any players and coaches who would like the experience of playing on clay courts and bettering their game. This is why we want to offer all players the opportunity to come and play tennis or padel tennis, join training camps, and take lessons. This will be a court for everyone to help elevate all South African tennis players.

'We will also start hosting tournaments by early 2023 and hope to build up our one-of-a-kind centre to host ATP tournaments on television one day. Our four-year plan is to host South Africa's first international tournament on clay!

Telesto Tennis Centre today

Following through on his commitment, the Telesto Tennis Centre opened to the public on 28 November. Jonathan says he looks forward to introducing George residents to the sport of padel tennis. For those not in the know, this racquet sport is typically played in doubles on a glass-



enclosed court, about half the size of a standard tennis court. Scoring is the same as for normal tennis, and balls used are similar but with a little less pressure.

Padel Tennis international following ...

Arguably the world's best footballer, Lionel Messi is known to be a huge fan of padel. The sport is played by around two million people in his native Argentina and is popular with many footballers, the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimović, Gerard Piqué and Francesco Totti also being regular players. According to skysports.com, Messi is such a big padel fan that he boasts a court in the garden at his home in Barcelona, Spain, and has been seen playing there against former team-mate Luis Suarez. Some guys have all the bucks, erm, ball skills ...

Back on the home front, padel tennis is only just gaining some momentum in South Africa. But with no courts in the vicinity of George, the Telesto padel tennis offering is a huge attraction. In additions to the courts, the centre has a pro shop, where you can hire or purchase the padel equipment, plus a tennis racquet stringer and general tennis equipment to purchase. The coffee shop is open and also serves cold drinks.

Players can rent a court for one-hour sessions at R300; should you need to hire the padel equipment, it is an additional R100.

To book a court, contact jonathan@telestoclaytennis.com or 066 236 6334. The sport is family-friendly, but Jonathan advises that children under 14 years be accompanied by an adult.





Immigration Act

In light of recent changes, what work permits do foreign nationals need to get?

Employing a foreign national without a valid work permit is an offence and could result in managers or individual employers getting a possible fine or even imprisonment.

The employment of foreigners is regulated by the Immigration Act 13 of 2002, and there've been recent changes made to it. So, what does the Act require of employers?

An employer's responsibility

Under the Act, an employer must try, in good faith, to ensure that no illegal foreigner is employed by the company or household and to ascertain the status or citizenship of the person who is employed. All the liability thus rests with the employer.

What's changed for Zimbabweans?

'The South African government took the decision not to renew the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) beyond the grace period to 31 December 2022. It means that ZEP holders are required to leave South Africa if their applications for a visa are declined, or they face deportation,' says Gavin Mulvenna, practising attorney at Kusile Consulting Services.

'ZEP holders are entitled to continue rendering services during the grace period, provided that the ZEP holder can furnish proof that a visa application has been submitted.

The appropriate visa must thus be applied for without delay,' adds Mulvenna.

Why have these changes been made?

There are proposed amendments to the Employment Services Act, which the government claims will help protect South African jobs. These amendments involve the introduction of quotas per sector and occupational category, and limit the number of foreigners employed in South Africa, which the government claims are there to protect employment opportunities for South Africans.

Can you dismiss illegal workers?

Even though the law has made it tougher on foreign nationals to be employed in South Africa, it does protect foreign workers. 'There is an ill-conceived view that employers may circumvent employment law when it comes to employing foreigners. Foreign employees, including those who do not have valid working visas, are afforded legal protection from unfair dismissal under the Labour Relations Act (LRA).

'The law does not declare that a contract of employment concluded without the required permit is void, nor does it provide that a foreigner who accepts work without a valid permit is guilty of an offence. What is prohibited is the act of employing a foreign national in violation of the law,' explains Mulvenna.



So what happens if you find that your foreign national no longer has a valid work permit?

If that happens, due care for the processes needs to be followed. 'Substantively, the employer may not employ any foreign national who is not entitled to work. Accordingly, valid and fair reason for terminating the employment of a foreign national, who is not in possession of the necessary statutory authorisation to work, exists. Procedurally, and given the explained protection of foreign nationals, fair procedure must be ensured.

'Ultimately, failing to require the necessary authority (work permit) would result in termination of the contract of employment – the contract of employment is impossible to perform in law (it is unlawful) – but the tenets of fairness must be observed, which include the requirement of procedural fairness, be it an incapacity hearing or a disciplinary hearing where, for example, false documentation has been tendered by the employee,' says Mulvenna.





So how does this effect HOAs and homeowners?

Pertinent provisions of the Immigration Act relating to the employment of foreigners by homeowners/contractors and the potential liability of the HOA):

Employment of foreigners is, as noted above, regulated by Sections 38 and 49 of the Immigration Act.

The employment in question is or can be between:

- i) The HOA and the employee; or
- ii) A homeowner and the employee; or
- iii) A contractor (used on the property) and the employee.

In terms of i) above, the HOA, in the capacity of employer, is bound by the same law as is a homeowner/contractor as employer, in respect of employment.

The pertinent questions relate to the HOA not being the employer, but where the homeowner, or the contractor, is the employer.

The employee's access to the premises is then at the discretion and behest of the HOA (both where the homeowner is the employer and where the contractor is the employer). The employee of the homeowner or contractor cannot render services if access is declined.

Accordingly, the question is: Is the HOA liable, or potentially liable, in granting such access?

Access can be said to be a sine qua non for the employee concerned to be able to render services. Purely from a logical point of view, the HOA is therefore materially instrumental in causing or allowing or facilitating or permitting the employment in question to exist/be performed, the HOA, of course, not being involved in or a party to the employment contract in question.



Section 42 of the Immigration Act is titled 'Aiding and abetting illegal foreigners'. It reads that no person shall aid, abet, assist, enable, or in any manner help (a) an illegal foreigner or (b) a foreigner in respect of any matter, conduct, or transaction which violates such foreigner's status, where applicable ...'

Granting access to an illegal foreigner for the purposes of employment can only be seen as enabling the illegal foreigner's illegal employment – a transaction that violates the foreigner's status – for example, not being in possession of the necessary work permit.

Section 42(b) provides for forbidden acts including, but not limited to:

(vii) doing anything for him or her, or on his or her behalf, in connection with his or her business or profession or occupation;

(viii) harbouring him or her, which includes providing accommodation.

If 'occupation' means to include employment, which it can reasonably be seen to mean, then granting the illegal foreigner access to render services can surely only be seen as aiding and abetting an illegal foreigner. The illegal foreigner is enabled to render services, purely and solely because access is granted.

Section 42(2) provides that, in any criminal proceedings, it is no defence to aver that the status of the foreigner concerned, or whether he or she was an illegal foreigner, was unknown to the accused, if it is proved that the accused ought reasonably to have known of the status of the foreigner, or whether she or he was an illegal foreigner.

This is pertinent because homeowners may be inclined to turn a blind eye to the issue. The HOA undoubtedly knows the nationality of each person granted access, for example via biometrics. As to whether the HOA would have reasonably known the status of the foreigner, that is debatable. It depends on which documentation is relied upon and submitted by the foreigner to gain access.

If it is accepted that granting access is aiding and abetting (which surely it is), then it may be that the only reasonable thing to do in the circumstances is to ask for a valid work permit from each entrant employee – more so where the homeowner is the employer (as opposed to where the contractor is the employer). In terms of contractors, it may be sufficient to require of the contractor to warrant that he/she has no illegal foreigners in his/her employment.

If the HOA's actions, in granting access, are seen as a contravention, or, put differently, what a court would likely rule, then the decisions and actions of the HOA must follow, as a non-party to the employment relationship. Homeowners may be required to be informed and consulted with (via the board or the trustees).

How to finance going off the grid

Cutting your reliance on Eskom

With load shedding, more South Africans are finding their own ways to keep the lights on, but at what cost?

The financial help available to fund off-grid solutions in the home

After more than a decade of load shedding, more South Africans are looking at off-grid solutions that allow them to carry on with their daily lives. Alternative power comes with a hefty price tag though, but some banks are now offering a range of funding options to lessen the financial blow. We look at what these are and if they are really worth it.

Is going off the grid financially worth it?

The simple answer is yes, but only if you know exactly what you need and whether you're going to live in your house for a long time. The start-up costs to going off the grid can be expensive, ranging from R150,000 to R350,000. The costs depend on your usage needs, as this will affect what type of off-grid solution you choose, so doing some in-depth research at the outset might save you a fair bit later.

Christiaan Hattingh, managing director of AWPpower, suggests starting off with a monitoring system that allows you to get a clearer picture of your energy usage.

'Our relatively warm and sunny climate makes a home solar system an attractive solution, but completely swapping grid supply for off-grid energy still requires a radical mind shift where households become conscious of how and when they use certain appliances,' he says.

He goes on to explain that although it sounds great, the reality is that off-grid supply usually has limited output capacity, generating between 5kW and 8kW in a single-storey home in comparison to approximately 13kW of on-demand grid supply. This means that things like your pool and water pumps, stove, oven, and air-conditioning unit, all of which have high peak power demand, may struggle to function properly on an off-grid supply.

To combat this problem, Hattingh advises homeowners to oversize their off-grid system by double, triple or even quadruple the capacity, but this will obviously bump up the cost.



What are the big banks offering?

After working out which solution works for your needs comes the prickly issue of how to pay for it. If you already have a mortgage on your home, then one obvious solution is to take further financing from it to fund your investment. Given the escalating interest rates, however, this may be a big drain on your monthly expenditure, but savings from a reduced electricity bill could offset some or all of it.

If you go down this route, then Absa and FNB are the best banks to help in increasing the valuation of your property so that it takes your investment in solar into account.

Nedbank also provides the home loan finance option, but has additionally introduced a new asset-backed solar solution. This solution is available to you regardless of who your bond is with, or even if your property isn't bonded at all. Their partnership with Hohm Energy helps customers assess their energy needs and find the best solution, and provides installation support.

Installation support is also provided by Standard Bank and their Solar Power and Back-up Package, which ranges

from R50,000 to R300,000. As part of it, customers get a free Home Power Analysis to get the right size solution, batteries, inverters, and solar panels, which are installed against national guidelines, and come with a warranty, certificate of compliance and a smart app monitoring system. You can purchase the package as a one-off payment or finance it through a range of options available directly with the bank.

Beware of the additional costs

As well as funding the initial outlay, you want to consider the maintenance costs of your installation and the impact it will have on your home insurance premium.

As a homeowner, it is your responsibility to inform your insurer of any additions you make to your home and ensure that these are covered by your existing policy. In most cases, any installation found inside the home will be covered under your home's content insurance. Permanent fixtures to the outside of the building, like solar panels for example, will be covered under your building insurance, but the insured value of the building must be increased to account for this.

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