

MARCH 2025

Bulletin

#overstrand4all

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

#C4ourself



HONOURING THE 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP LEGACY IN GANSBAAI

A NEW BEGINNING FOR SPORTS COMMUNITY

A jubilant crowd showed up to celebrate the grand reopening of the soccer pitch at the multi-purpose sports centre, Spaces for Sport, in Gansbaai and to thank and meet their "well doers" in person.

The centre, particularly the soccer pitch, has a remarkable history.

Back in 2009, following on the announcement that South Africa was to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the English Premier League chose to support the Spaces for Sport initiative in Gansbaai as its legacy project.

A year earlier, the Grootbos Foundation (with the full support of Overstrand Municipality) set out to secure financial support for the creation of a world-class sports centre right in the middle of three highly diverse communities in and around Gansbaai.

Apart from providing a space where youngsters from varying backgrounds could connect in a safe and constructive manner after school, the overarching objective was "to level the playing field": In other words, to ensure that budding sports talent from less-privileged communities enjoy the same access to world-class sports facilities and support as their more privileged counterparts do so that they, too, can unlock potential life-changing opportunities.

And it was this intention that caught the eye of Sir Dave Richards, the then chair of the English Premier League.

It was agreed that the league's Premier Skills Programme would fund the construction of a synthetic soccer field at the budding sports centre and, shortly thereafter, this partnership was extended to include Burmar Civils and Rhino-Turf.

Sixteen years on, the surface of that well-constructed synthetic soccer field has now been replaced with artificial turf, a technology involving the use of bio-content which makes this the most eco-friendly, full-size soccer field in the country.

R5.5 million eco-friendly pitch

"Project Pitch Perfect" was made possible by the Premier League, the Grootbos Foundation and Rhino-Turf that jointly footed the R5.5 million-bill to install the artificial-grass playing surface.

As Michael Lutzeyer (founder of the Grootbos Foundation) pointed out, "since its inception, Spaces for Sport undoubtedly succeeded in uplifting the Gansbaai community by and large and transformed the lives of many a young athlete – an accomplishment that would not have been possible had it not been for the tenacity of former area manager Kat Myburgh and the generous support of the Premier League.

"What makes the Premier League's backing so special is that it extends well beyond mere financial support. In fact, in the days leading up to the reopening, the league generously offered a free coaching skills programme to 30 local teachers and sports club coaches to help equip them with some valuable tools they will need to nurture our rising sports stars.

"On top of that, Gansbaai resident and Grootbos Foundation Skills Coach, Mzi Matiwan, was recognised as a Premier League Community Captain based on his decade-long participation in the Premier Skills Programme and commitment to community development.

"Today, we are proud to say that Spaces for Sport not only caters for budding soccer stars but also for those who dream of excelling in netball, cricket, canoeing and women's rugby.

"On behalf of the Foundation, we thank our partners in the public and private sector for their continued support and the youngsters for their unwavering commitment to excel by making the most of every opportunity that comes their way."

Speaking on behalf of Overstrand Municipality, Executive Mayor Dr Annelie Rabie said: "The Premier Skills Programme's hands-on involvement in developing the skills of coaches, educators and referees at grassroots level is commendable.

"More importantly, though, the impact of this programme extends well beyond grooming young athletes. Evidently, this programme also fosters social cohesion since, today, the entire Gansbaai community has gathered here to show that they stand united behind our young stars and will cheer them on all the way.

"May the legacy we are celebrating here today live on forever."



Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Ricardo Mackenzie, had the honour to cut the ceremonial ribbon. He remarked that the collaborative efforts of Overstrand Municipality, the Grootbos Foundation, the Premier League and Rhino-Turf serve as a model for all who wish to affect positive change. Also present at the opening celebration were Kat Myburgh, former Gansbaai Area Manager; Michael Lutzeyer, Founder of the Grootbos Foundation; Executive Mayor Dr. Annelie Rabie; Ward 1 Councillor Dudley Coetzee; Elicia du Toit, Spaces for Sports Co-ordinator at Overstrand Municipality; and Ward 14 Councillor Riana de Coning.

INTERIM PLAN TO MANAGE HERMANUS BABOONS

Late in 2024, the Western Cape Government and CapeNature consented to an extension of Overstrand Municipality's baboon management programme for five months.

All interested and affected parties now have until June 2025 to reach an agreement on certain key issues, including funding and the delegation of responsibilities, in order to develop a strategy that will guide the programme from July 2025 onwards.

At this point in time, the municipality is in the process of fine-tuning its five-month extension plan for hiring staff and procuring the necessary equipment to see the current baboon management programme through till the end of June. Meanwhile, an interim plan to manage Hermanus' baboon troops has been implemented.

As an interim measure, Fernkloof rangers and law enforcement personnel will be utilised to keep the baboons in check. To achieve this, when the troop is in-town and the team is called upon to intervene

in cases of raids and home incursions, use will be made of paintball markers to fire air-shots along with audible primers to help move the baboons out of town and back into the mountain.

Note that permission to use paintballs with paintball markers as a deterrent is subject not only to obtaining the necessary permits from CapeNature but also to the proviso that all personnel must first undergo thorough training in CapeNature's standard operating procedures in order to implement these techniques correctly and safely.

Outside the built area and along the mountains, the same tools and techniques will be implemented to discourage troops from entering town, especially in the mornings, and to get them to move further up the mountain and away from town. Where the fire safety index allows, use may also be made of loud bear bangers in cases such as these.

Overstrand Municipality is of the opinion that the implementation of these interim measures will go a

long way toward informing the baboon management strategy that ought to be followed for the duration of the five-month extension period, especially since the five-month extension plan will be implemented in phases, as staff and equipment become available, and as and when permit applications for and training in the use of certain deterrents have run its course.

Most importantly, such a phased approach allows for ongoing improvements day by day, week by week – improvements that could help us to arrive at the best possible strategy to manage the baboon troops in the Overstrand well beyond June 2025.

Meanwhile, the municipality appeals to all residents to continue making use of their respective local WhatsApp groups to provide regular updates on the baboon troops' whereabouts. Your inputs are invaluable in forewarning other residents that the baboons might be headed their way and that they should be on their guard and take the necessary precautions timeously.

No matter when or where, if you spot a baboon, contact the Baboon Hotline.



OVERSTRAND BABOON HOTLINE | 069 151 5962

Securing freshwater resources:

DON'T DISCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR WETLANDS

Recently, *Bulletin* highlighted the plans that are underway to restore the Onrus River wetlands. Sadly, it took a couple of consecutive catastrophic events to remind us just how vital the role is that wetlands fulfil in safeguarding our freshwater resources and in protecting us against the potential impact of natural disasters.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on the 2nd of February every year, and this year the message was loud and clear: It is in everyone's best interest to go full-out to protect wetlands.

No matter their shape or size, wetlands constitute unique ecosystems:

- ❖ By their very nature, they have the ability to retain water. This means that water is released slowly, which helps to keep water levels in check and to curb soil erosion.
- ❖ The plants that occur in wetlands typically act as "sponges". They absorb excess nutrients from the surrounding water, implying that the water eventually released from a wetland has been "purified" to the extent where it could serve as a viable freshwater resource.
- ❖ When functioning properly, a wetland ecosystem could mitigate climate change even better than a forest could. This is because wetlands not only sequester carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis but also trap runoff in the soil.

In addition to the Onrus River wetland, several other wetlands in the Overstrand include the Davidskraal wetland in Betty's Bay, the Mill Stream wetland in Stanford, the Kleinmond-Rooiels/Lamloch-Bot River system, the Flat Street wetland at the Hermanus Golf Course, the Klein River estuary, and the Paddavlei wetland in Hawston.

Revamped Paddavlei footpath

In an attempt to conserve and safeguard these wetlands to the best of its ability, Overstrand partnered with Whale Coast Conservation and the Paddavlei Eco Group (PEG).

The opening of the revamped, 547 m-long footpath that meanders through a milkwood forest all along Paddavlei in November last year serves as testimony that the tireless efforts of all concerned and the money invested in the process have not been in vain.

For starters, this three-year project had to focus on "cutting the reeds down to size". The excessive proliferation of reeds poses a huge threat to wetlands' delicate ecosystems and must be kept in check.

Working side by side, municipal workers and PEG members set about ridding the wetland of excessive reeds manually. Even though they managed to make significant inroads during the first year, it took the procurement of "mechanical assistance" in the form of a reed shedder to get the job done.

Meanwhile, Whale Coast Conservation stepped in to help with the construction of the actual footpath under the watchful eye of Overstrand's environmentalists who offered technical advice where and whenever needed.

And in the background, the team was exploring all available avenues to see whether a potential "add-on" could be realised.

From the outset, all involved remarked that the Paddavlei project had the potential to not only involve the general public but to serve as "an outdoor classroom" where kids could learn more about wetlands and why they should be protected by becoming directly involved in conservation efforts.

With this potential outcome in mind, the team reached out to Hawston Primary and was surprised by how enthusiastically this proposal was received and how willing the school was to participate. This led to the establishment of the Hawston Primary School Eco-club that, to this day, meet weekly during the school term to not only actively participate in clean-up activities where and when possible but to engage in conversations that pique their curiosity about nature and enable them to gain a better understanding of why even the smallest, seemingly most insignificant ecosystem plays a crucial role in maintaining nature's delicate balance and is, therefore, deserving of protection.



No matter how eager they are to get to their "outdoor classroom", everyone must first listen attentively to what they will be learning about on that day's excursion and be reminded of why it is important to always obey the instructions of their teachers and the fieldworkers so that everyone can get home safely.

**Note that scientific experiments aimed at purifying and improving the quality of the storm water that flows into Paddavlei are ongoing.*



COLLECT YOUR DRIVER'S LICENCE CARD

It came to *Bulletin*'s attention that lots and lots of driver's licence cards are awaiting collection from Traffic Services' offices in Hermanus.

If you applied for your driver's licence some eight weeks or longer ago and have not been notified that it is ready for collection yet, please call the Traffic Department during office hours on **028 313 1044** or **028 313 8136**.

Also keep in mind that a temporary driver's licence is only valid for six months, so better get round to collecting the real McCoy sooner than later!