



VILLAGE LIFE

MISTY CLIFFS CONSERVATION VILLAGE
COMMUNITY NEWS AND INFORMATION

MISTY CLIFFS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

hiking / wildlife / conservation / fire / safety & security / pics of the season / important numbers



Autumn 2025



V I L L A G E L I F E

A Misty Cliffs Village Association Publication

Autumn 2025

Where the mountains meet the sea

Tucked between Kommetjie and Scarborough, about a 45-minute drive from Cape Town, Misty Cliffs is a small, secluded village perched on the mountainside. With just 43 houses, this intimate community is named after the ethereal mist that drapes over the cliffs and beach for much of the year.

Though the beach is small, it's perfect for a peaceful stroll or a seaside picnic on the soft sand. The powerful waves make swimming unsafe, but they attract surfers in search of big, barreling swells. For families and nature lovers, the rock pools offer a fascinating glimpse into the intertidal world, teeming with marine life.

Misty Cliffs remains blissfully untouched by commercial development – there are no shops here, so be sure to bring what you need. Nearby Scarborough and Kommetjie offer cozy cafés and restaurants for when you're craving a bite.

This is a place like no other. Misty Cliffs welcomes you with its rugged beauty, abundant wildlife, and the unmistakable scent of fynbos and ocean air. Whether you're here for a weekend or a lifetime, you'll feel at home. Breathe in, slow down, and enjoy every moment.

Thank you to Schalk Visser for the cover photograph

Thank you to Seema Khehar, David Holme, and Schalk Visser for the inclusion of their photographs

www.mistycliffs.org.za

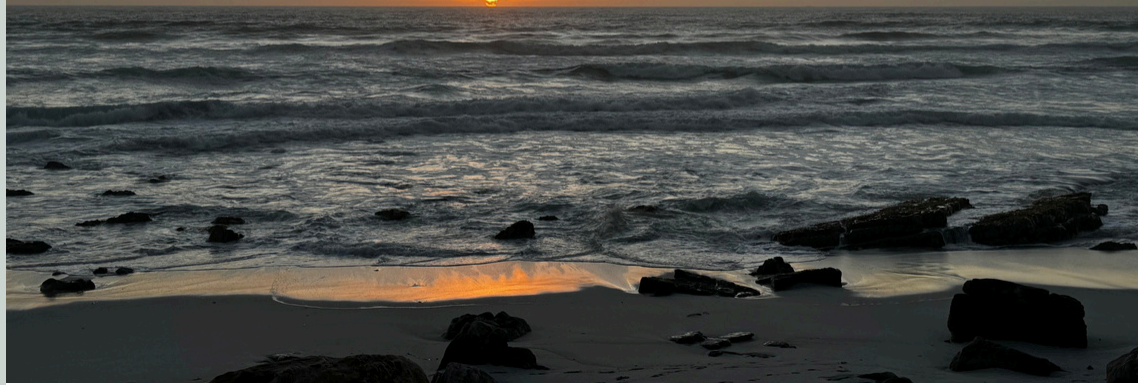
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You can download the PDF of this magazine at www.mistycliffs.org.za



The Misty Cliffs Village Association is a registered Public Benefit Organisation based in Misty Cliffs, a conservation village on the Cape Peninsula surrounded by the Table Mountain National Park and Baskloof Fynbos Private Nature Reserve. The objectives of the Association are to promote activities that advance the interests of, and benefit, the community. This includes monitoring development in the village to ensure that building regulations are complied with and that the impact on the environment is minimised. The association also aims to promote awareness of the unique natural environment of the area and encourage its preservation and maintenance.

WELCOME TO MISTY CLIFFS



Welcome to the second issue of Village Life, the magazine dedicated to our Misty Cliffs community! Our goal is to bring residents and visitors closer together by sharing stories, news, and updates that celebrate this special place we call home.

In this issue, we take a look at the rich history of Misty Cliffs and introduce you to some of the incredible people who live here. Our community is not just about its residents – it's also home to a diverse ecosystem of wildlife and vegetation, making it a truly unique and precious place.

With beauty comes responsibility. Fire safety remains a top priority, and we've included important tips to help reduce risk. We also highlight ways to coexist with our local wildlife, including the baboon troop and otter family that share this space with us.

As more people are drawn to Misty Cliffs, we face challenges such as parking and security. This magazine aims to keep you informed, offering practical guidance so we can navigate these issues together and ensure our village continues to thrive. We hope Village Life strengthens our sense of connection and inspires us all to protect and cherish this extraordinary community.

Gavin Betty
Chairperson, Misty Cliffs Village Association



OUT AND ABOUT

Outdoors

The Misty Cliffs area offers a variety of outdoor activities, from world-class surfing to scenic hikes and coastal walks. Whether you're looking for adventure or a peaceful escape in nature, there's something for everyone.

For hiking enthusiasts, the Baskloof Fynbos Private Nature Reserve behind Scarborough boasts a network of stunning trails with sweeping vistas and rich biodiversity. To access these trails, you'll need a day- or annual-permit, available for purchase at The Hub on Main Road, Scarborough. Three official circular routes start from Hilltop Road, offering varied terrain and spectacular views. One trail leads to Kleinplaas Dam, but it's best to walk in a group due to safety concerns.

If you prefer a coastal walk, the Misty Cliffs to Crayfish Factory route is a must. This scenic shoreline path showcases dramatic ocean views and is perfect for spotting seabirds and marine life. The Misty Cliffs beach break attracts experienced surfers with its powerful waves, and Witsand Beach is a hotspot for windsurfing, kitesurfing, and stand-up paddleboarding.

Even if you're not venturing into the water, it's a spectacular place to relax and take in the coastal beauty.

A short drive away, the Cape Point Nature Reserve boasts pristine hiking trails to Venus Pools – one of Cape Town's best-kept secrets – where you can swim in natural rock pools, an unforgettable experience. The entrance fee is a small price to pay for such breathtaking natural beauty. Whether you're hiking through fynbos-covered hills, catching waves, or simply soaking in the scenery, Misty Cliffs is an outdoor-lover's paradise.



Baskloof Fynbos Private Nature Reserve straddles the mountains around and behind the Conservation Villages of Misty Cliffs and Scarborough. Created by Ivan and Danielle Harris, with a deep commitment to conservation of the incredible fynbos in the area, the team is committed to active conservation, protection of Baskloof, and managing our natural resources sustainably. Day and Annual Permits can be bought at The Hub in Main Road, Scarborough. All proceeds go towards the upkeep and conservation of the nature reserve.

www.baskloof.com



COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Coastal Seaweed and Wild Plant Foraging Experience

Join RE Wild Food for a half-day experience where they will introduce you to some of our local edible seaweeds and wild plants. Explore rock pools at low tide, learn how to harvest sustainably and prepare seaweeds and indigenous plants, and watch recipe demos cooked on the fire. Enjoy a wild-food inspired, plant-based 4-course meal with paired organic wines. Email lindy@rewildfood.co.za or WhatsApp +27 (0) 825736123.

Misty Cliffs Village Association Communications

If you are a homeowner, manager or renter in Misty Cliffs and would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list to keep updated with information, please email us: secretary@mistycliffs.org.za

Snake and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre

Rated one of the most beautiful South's "must do's", it is an excellent destination for anyone interested in learning and observing some of the most fascinating reptile species. You will have the opportunity to learn many interesting facts about the animals, and have an opportunity to get up close and personal with some of our scaly friends! www.minimoshows.org

Dogs and our local Otter Family

This family of African Clawless Otters are 'near threatened' and protected under South African law. Residents and visitors are encouraged to do all they can to avoid disruption of these shy mammals, and dogs must be leashed around the sanctuary. Please take note of signage to protect this little family.



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Meet the locals

Bob and Felicity Fussell have had a home from home at Misty Cliffs for decades.

Bob Fussell and Felicity Rogers met on the deck of the Athlone Castle, a ship built in 1935, used during World War 2 as a troopship, and scrapped in 1965 after three decades of oceanic expeditions between continents. On one of these trips between South Africa and England in 1960, a passenger went missing mid voyage. The necessary but fruitless turn-around to see where she may have gone overboard meant the ship faced some very tumultuous seas. Those who were seasick made their way to the top deck for fresh air and some respite. It was on that stormy night on the open deck that Bob met Felicity. They were both 21 years old – on their way to England to work and experience life in another country – and they fell in love.

Just over a year later, after working and sight-seeing in the UK, the young couple returned to settle back home in South Africa. Felicity was shown a plot that her mother had bought on the outskirts of Cape Town, on a wild and misty coastline.

“She bought this plot in 1960 while we were in England, and we thought she was crazy,” says Felicity. “It was just bush in the middle of nowhere!” Felicity’s mother, Bouverie, was a registered foster mother, and her father, James, a plumber on the railways – with not much extra money lying around for an extra plot with no running water or electricity! Despite this, they began to create a home there, bit by bit.



Her father designed and built the initial house during those early years in the 60s, backbreaking work that included getting a water source and carving out a stairway to the beach. Their house was one of four in Misty Cliffs at the time.

“They were amazing people!” – both Felicity and Bob agree. “We sometimes had up to 20 babies or small children in our home in Plumstead at a time,” says Felicity. Her mother created home for babies and toddlers – often abandoned, with severe health issues or disabilities. Felicity remembers watching them grow up, losing many to outdated practices and ill health, and three being adopted into their family. “My childhood consisted of changing and washing nappies, bathing and feeding babies ... and if my friend from across the road had done her homework, she could come and help too.”

Weekends were mostly spent at Misty Cliffs, with all the children in the Rogers’ care, as the home was built over years. Many celebrations, family gatherings and holidays together have been enjoyed there over the decades.

MEET THE LOCALS ...

Bob's childhood in Johannesburg was ruptured by the death of both of his parents when he was a young boy, leading to him being sent to boarding school, funded by the Masonic Lodge his father had been part of. "Weekends were terrible as all the boys went home to their families," he remembers, "and I used to sleep in this huge dormitory alone, swim alone, eat alone, and I shed many tears under the tree in the empty school yard." A friend's family basically 'adopted' him informally, included him in their holidays while he was a teen – and they are still friends to this day.

The Misty Cliffs home holds many good memories, as well as the ashes of Bouverie and James, which were scattered on the hill next to the stream nearby. The house is named BeeJay in loving memory of this couple who laid down so much for others.

Both Bob and Felicity's stories of inclusion, loss and finding one another – on a boat between continents more than six decades ago – speak of perseverance, hardship, compassion, companionship, and lasting love.



When asked what they love most about Misty Cliffs, Felicity says she does not have one bad memory of the place, and with it has always come a sense of being drawn to the calm and peace here, despite the wildness of the ocean.

Bob says, "I am happy here, because she is here ..." and winks as he smiles at the love of his life across the table from him. After 65 years, the story of their house in Misty Cliffs is a true story of 'home is where the heart is.'



DOG WALKING

Misty Cliffs is home to many dog owners, and our community thrives on mutual respect and consideration. Rather than creating tension over dog-related concerns, we've worked with the Area Manager of Table Mountain National Park to clarify the official rules and regulations for dog walking in our area. To help ensure that everyone – both residents and visitors – enjoy our beautiful surroundings responsibly, these guidelines are available on our website at the link below.

www.mistycliffs.org.za/conservation/dogs.html

A BIT OF HISTORY

Seagull's Nest

A Misty Cliffs Landmark - By Sue Fish

The stone building, the last house above the road in Misty Cliffs on the left, before one heads towards Scarborough, has belonged to the Blersch family for 64 years. Today, the great-great grandchildren of the late Walther Blersch are now enjoying this special family holiday home, which has hosted many family celebrations over the decades.

Our grandfather, Walther Blersch's introduction to Misty Cliffs was in the early 1930's, when, as a keen angler, he regularly cycled from Kommetjie to cast a line into the sea from the rocks in front of the Le Roux house*. In those days there were fish!

The house originally consisted of two rondawels that were built to accommodate the resident engineer and surveyor who supervised the construction of the coastal road. The north rondawel has a fireplace and housed the engineer. Unfortunately, we are unsure of the date of construction.

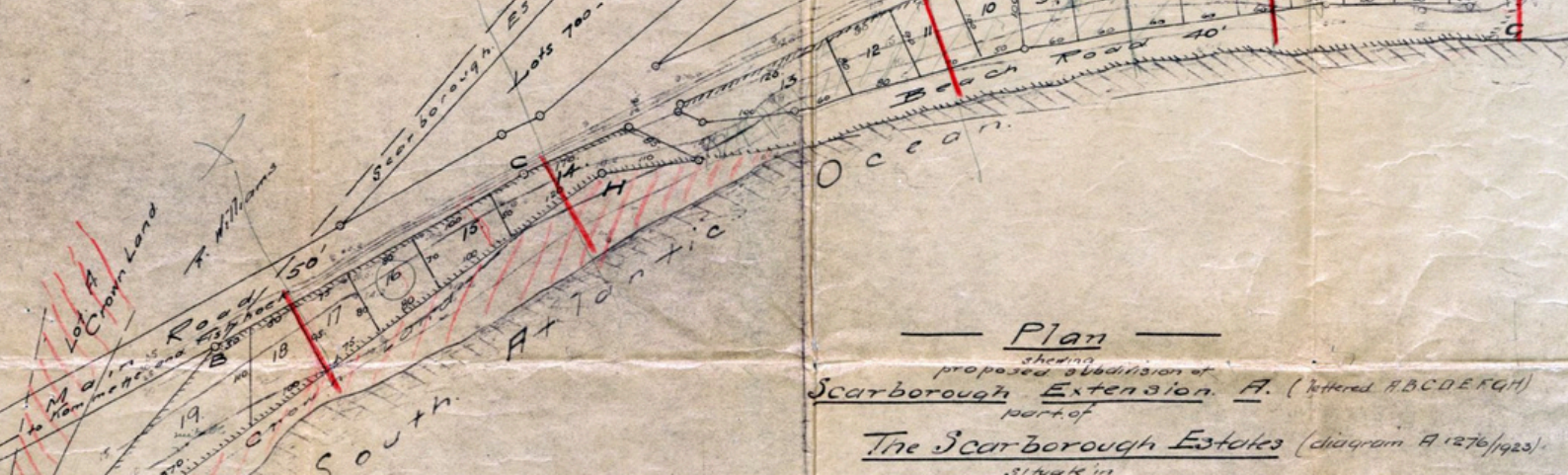
**No 29 Main Rd, Dr Johan & Doris du pre le Roux, Jon Kerr's grandparents.*

Seagull's Nest Title Deed

In 1960, Walther and his second wife, Judith, established that the property was on the market. They were in two minds as to whether they should purchase the property, as Walther had recently retired as Town Clerk of Stellenbosch and finances were constrained. However, their decision was taken on the toss of a penny, and the rest is history.

Incidentally, the coin was put into an old Boxer tobacco bag – Walther was well-known for his pipe smoking – and hung from a hook in the lounge, until it was stolen in a burglary. The property had already been named Seagull's Nest.

Seagull's Nest was purchased for 1 800 Pounds from the widow of Douglas Moore, who had bought the property in 1950. From what we can recall from our early childhood, the house had a malthoid roof, steel window frames, a porcelain sink in the kitchen, a basic bathroom with a wood-fired geyser, outside toilet, and no electricity.



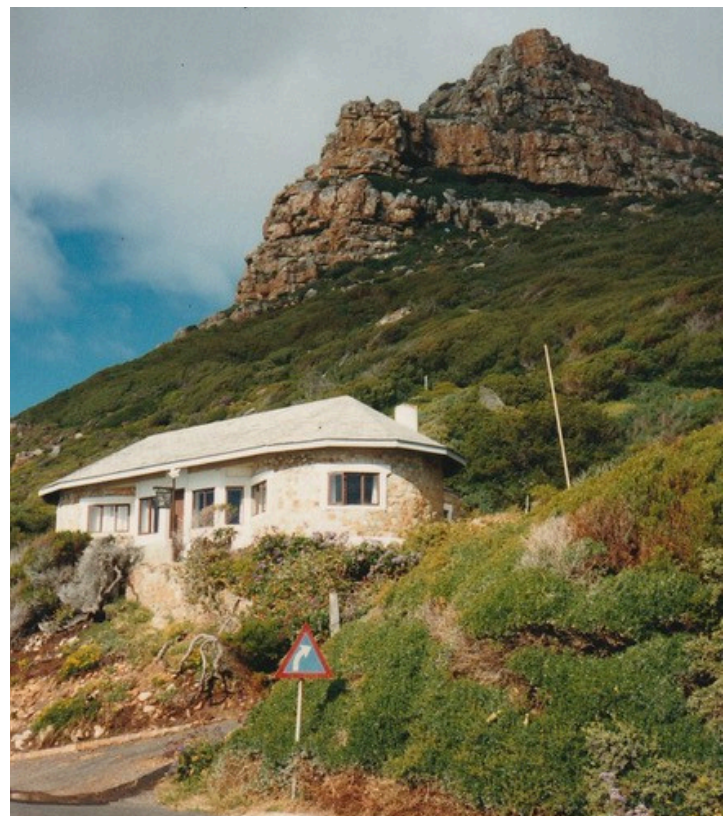
I can even recall a glass jar containing a puff adder on the windowsill in the lounge! Water supply came from a small dam on the stream that runs from the mountain through the property to the beach, and was stored in two tanks behind the house. The original septic tank is still in use. Over the years, changes and upgrades have been made, but the house has retained its unique character. The small rondawel in the garden was originally brick with cement. About 20 years ago it was clad with stone, in keeping with the “stone theme” of the property.

Our parents built the braai area with stones that they carried up from the beach.

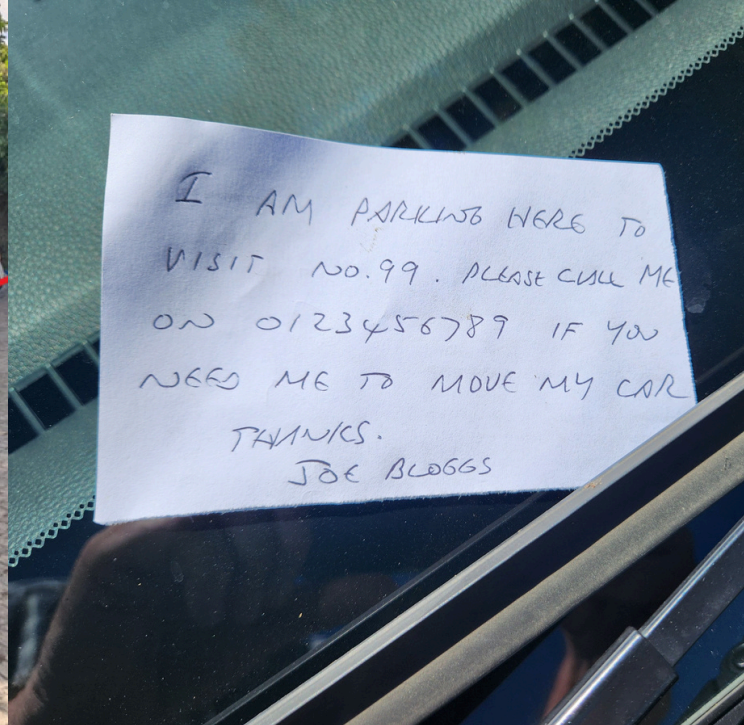
In the early days, baboons were regular visitors and enjoyed easier access into the house, as there were no burglar bars or gates to deter them!

In 1974 Walther’s widow sold the property to Hans and Michael Blersch (sons from Walther’s first marriage) for the price of R20 000.

The current owners of Seagull’s Nest are Hans Blersch’s children (Margaret Clegg, Susan Fish, Michelle Rall and Peter Blersch).



Please email any history you know from the area to
villagelife@mistycliffs.org.za



PARKING MATTERS

We live in a piece of paradise! This means there will be lots of visitors, film shoots, and cars coming and going. There is not enough parking at Misty Cliffs! Please be kind and considerate in your parking.

For the parking spot owners

- Make sure you have good signage that mentions that it's a private parking spot and that no parking is allowed without the permission of the owner.
- Make sure your guests know how many parking places you have at your house and tell them that any excess to that will have to park on Main Road or arrange 'legal' places with your neighbours for a limited time.
- If you are OK with the public parking there when you are not there, ask them to leave a phone number on the dashboard so you can contact them if you arrive.
- Consider a penalty for illegal parking – wheel clamp with proceeds donated to a charity.

For the guests

- There is often a limited number of parking places at the house you are visiting.
- If you arrive in more cars than allocated spaces or you invite friends over, they must park legally elsewhere. You can't assume the house next door is not going to need their spaces. Contact the owner or house manager to arrange for spaces next door, if available.
- Don't block or narrow the road by treating a parallel parking space as a "nose-in, angle or double" parking space.
- Be considerate and respectful to the owners who are often dealing with this every weekend.



"Strong communities are born out of individuals being their best selves." Leanne Betasamosake

WILDLIFE AT MISTY CLIFFS

OYSTERCATCHERS

The striking and rare African Black Oystercatcher has made the Misty Cliffs shoreline its home for centuries. This near-threatened bird rarely eats oysters, rather surprisingly, but enjoys shellfish, mussels, and limpets. They nest on the ground, which means they are at high risk of disturbance. Breeding pairs are monogamous and highly territorial, so don't go near their nests if you can avoid it. They are an important part of our coastal ecosystem.



CLAWLESS OTTERS

The Cape Clawless Otter, also known as the African Clawless Otter, is a fascinating and elusive semi-aquatic mammal found along the rivers, estuaries, and coastlines of southern Africa. This playful yet shy creature is one of only three otter species found in Africa and is particularly special to the Misty Cliffs area, where they can sometimes be spotted along the shore or in rocky tidal pools.



LOCAL SNAKES

If you find a snake in your home or garden, please call a snake catcher/rescuer who will come and remove the snake, and set it free elsewhere. There is usually a fee attached to this, but a small price to pay for keeping nature thriving.



REFUSE REMOVAL

Living on the edge of nature the way we do, means we have to be extra careful of how we manage waste. If we do not manage our waste disposal responsibly, baboons become habituated to getting a free high-calorie meal in the village and they will take up residence in the cliffs above, ready to descend whenever they can. This has terrible consequences, impacting on so many issues, and disrupting our ecosystem. Here are some rules that help:

1. Collection day is Tuesday. Do not put your refuse out before sunset on Monday.
2. Wet refuse goes into black plastic bags INSIDE the bins.
 - The truck cannot go up Old Camp Rd so the bins are emptied by hand. If refuse is NOT in black plastic bags, it will be ignored.
 - The subcontractor comes BEFORE sunrise on Tuesday morning to avoid the baboons.
 - The bin should be a baboon-proof bin with a lockable lid.
 - Some bins are in combination-locked enclosures and the code is often 0000.
3. Recycling goes into the clear bags and is left BESIDE the wheelie bin every second week.
 - The city uses a separate recycling subcontractor to collect that.
 - Check the Misty Cliffs WhatsApp groups for which weeks recycling can be put out.
 - The baboons have learned they don't have calorific value so they ignore recycling.
4. Take your wheelie bin inside as soon as you can, otherwise walkers, builders, and visitors put refuse in the bin during the day and they become a problem again.
5. PLEASE obey these simple rules and the baboons will forage in the mountains (as they should) and you can enjoy your G&T on the deck (as you should).



LIVING AMONG THE CHACMA BABOONS

Misty Cliffs is home to the Chacma Baboon, also known as the Cape Baboon, a highly social and intelligent species that has roamed the mountainous Cape Peninsula for thousands of years – long before human settlement. While they are not considered threatened as a species, urban expansion has increasingly brought them into contact with people, often creating conflict for both sides.

Living in close proximity to nature means sharing our environment with these remarkable primates. However, their curiosity and adaptability sometimes lead them into human spaces, where they are often viewed as 'pests'. Proper baboon management is essential to maintaining a peaceful coexistence, and one of the most effective ways to reduce human-baboon conflict is by keeping garbage and food sources securely out of their reach.

By taking simple precautions, we can respect their place in the ecosystem while minimising negative encounters – ensuring a better balance between humans and wildlife.

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY SAFE



Misty Cliffs has a low crime rate and that is largely because the community funded a security camera system that covers main routes, key junctions, and perimeters with both infrared and thermal cameras. It is monitored by Omnivision, and CIS (Condon Investigative Security) based in Scarborough, respond. Since then, crime has fallen to nearly zero and the few incidents have been restricted to petty theft. Criminals know that the streets are monitored 24/7.

The implementation of a camera security system here faces a unique challenge due to its bushy mountain landscapes, loud sea noise, open public beach and limited law enforcement resources. Cameras are visible in strategic locations such as on Main Rd, at intersections and on the firebreak. All of these signal to criminals that their actions are being monitored. This has significantly reduced the likelihood of criminal activities. The recorded footage is invaluable for CIS and law enforcement. In the event of a crime, security footage provides crucial evidence that aids in the identification and apprehension of suspects. This capability not only helps solve crimes faster, but also increases the rate of successful prosecutions, reinforcing the village's overall sense of security.

However, the efficacy of the system depends on ongoing community financial support, the quality of the cameras, proper installation, and regular maintenance. Community involvement, financial support, and awareness via WhatsApp groups also play a crucial role in maximising the benefits of the security system.

SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

- Never leave laptops, cameras, brief cases etc. in your car, day or night.
- Never leave laptops, cell phones, wallets, purses, handbags, keys etc. unattended in the house. When you go to bed take these things with you and lock internal doors.
- If you have an alarm, make sure it's armed at night, even if you're present.
- If you're absorbed in TV or a good book, make sure all your doors and windows are locked on the inside.
- If you're aware of a break-in happening during the night, DO NOT confront the burglars, but quietly phone the home's security company so that there's a good chance of catching intruders red-handed.
- If you don't have an alarm or have not set it, don't expect any generosity from your insurance company if you're robbed.
- Keep a lookout for unfamiliar people or vehicles wandering around the neighbourhood. Notify your security company of any such sightings.

FIRE SAFETY

Living so close to the magnificent fynbos that surrounds us, those who live in or near Misty Cliffs need to be extra vigilant when it comes to fire risks.

Awareness

The Western Cape is highly prone to wildfires, particularly during the long, dry, and windy summer months. While fire plays a natural role in the fynbos ecosystem, helping to regenerate plant life and maintain biodiversity, uncontrolled fires pose a serious threat to homes, livelihoods, and the environment.

The Scarborough and Misty Cliffs area has experienced devastating fires in recent years, with the most recent blaze in December 2023. Firefighting crews and volunteers battled relentlessly for days to contain the flames, highlighting the ongoing risk faced by our community. In response, the Scarborough community (recently joined by some Misty residents) have established a dedicated fire unit to help protect the village from advancing wildfires. Additionally, the owners of Baskloof Fynbos Private Nature Reserve manage and maintain the firebreak along the urban edge behind the mountainside properties, creating a crucial defense line.

Most uncontrolled fires result from human negligence, particularly on windy days. Preventing fires starts with all of us. Thanks to CapeNature, here are some key tips to reduce the risk. By staying vigilant and proactive, we can help protect our community and the natural beauty that surrounds us.

A few things to be aware of:

- Remove alien vegetation as far as is possible from your surroundings, especially if you have an empty plot.
- Create a firebreak if you are on the edge of natural spaces.
- Always have a large container with sand in it nearby.
- Do not leave open fires unattended and remember to smother them with sand once not needed.
- Don't allow children to make fires without adult supervision.
- Dispose of hot ash and coal away from any flammable plant material or rubbish.
- Make sure there are no illegal or faulty electrical connections in or near your home as illegal or faulty connections can get hot and start a fire.
- Keep the area around your home clear of materials that can burn, such as firewood, kindling, and rubbish.
- If you burn rubbish, do so on cooler days when there is no wind.
- Dispose of lit cigarette butts responsibly.
- Do not use fireworks or flares.
- Report veld fires immediately by calling 112 from a cell phone or 10177 from a landline.
- Have the emergency numbers easily accessible to get help.

PICS OF THE SEASON



Misty Cliffs Shoreline Beauty - by David Holme



Sun over calm seas at Misty Cliffs - by Seema Khehar

Top Two

Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring - each season at Misty Cliffs boasts its own special allure. These photographs are the two that best express some of what compels people to visit ... or stay. The winner will receive a prize from a local business. Prizes range from vouchers for a meal or local activity, or a decent bottle of wine. Don't forget to capture those amazing moments for the next edition of Village Life.

Please email your photographs taken in and around Misty Cliffs, along with a caption and your full name, to villagelife@mistycliffs.org.za

BUSINESS AND SERVICES

If you would like to advertise in the next edition, please email villagelife@mistycliffs.org.za



Enjoy hiking the beautiful
footpaths of Baskloof

R250 per person per annum

R 60 per person per day

The permit fee contributes to path
maintenance, signage and alien clearing.

Get your required permit here at the
Village Hub for a selection of hikes starting
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Danielle Harris 082 680 6188 / www.baskloof.com



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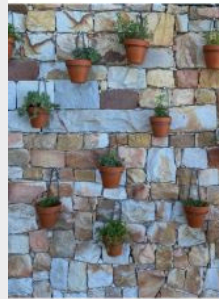
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Landscaping



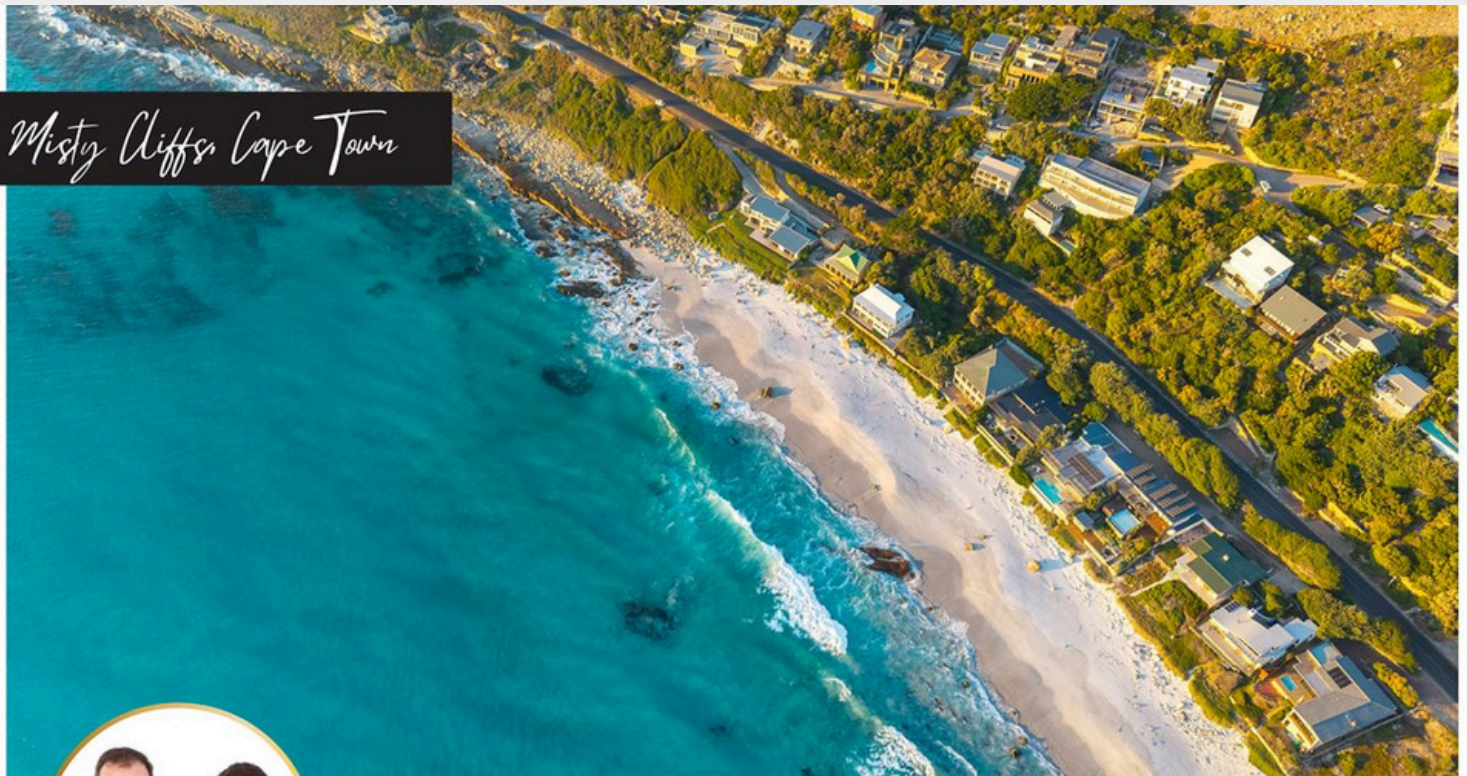
Landscaping and sourcing of plants, servicing
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