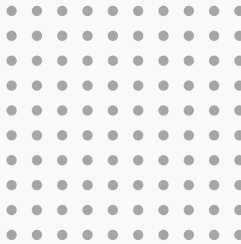


The Hogsback Times



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JULY 2026

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CLOSING TIME

PLEASE NOTE: AS OF 1 AUGUST, MIKI IS NO LONGER AFFILIATED WITH THE HTO OR ANY OTHER HOGSBACK ASSOCIATION. MY VIEWS AND ACTIONS ARE THOSE OF A LOCAL RESIDENT AND BUSINESS OWNER AND IN MY PERSONAL CAPACITY.

If you have any questions or would like to submit a story/letter/article please email miki@hbtimes.co.za. Cut off is 23rd every month!

My dearest Hogsback Community,

This month just highlighted again...Perspective changes everything.

I sat down to write about Christmas in July and somehow ended up writing two completely opposing articles. One celebrated the excitement, the volunteers, the guests, the laughter and the lights. And, not mine, but the general ridiculous joy of pretending it's Christmas in the middle of winter.

The other was filled with committee frustrations, missing bunting, exploding power supplies, social media headaches, sore muscles, injuries and enough behind-the-scenes chaos to make me wonder why anyone volunteers for anything. The strange part...

Both articles were completely true.

My first thought was that perhaps I've finally developed multiple personalities. (If so, at least one of them appears to be reasonably festive.) But after sitting with it for a while, I realised something much simpler...Perspective is everything.

The way we experience almost anything depends on where we're standing when we look at it. The same event can leave one person inspired and another exhausted. One business owner celebrates their best weekend of the year, while another quietly wonders why it wasn't busier. One volunteer remembers laughter and another remembers figuring out table layouts at midnight. Neither is wrong.

They're simply standing in different places. I think Hogsback is a lot like that... contains many perspectives anyway. We often spend so much time trying to convince each other that our version is the right one that we forget there is room for many truths to exist at once. This village is beautiful, this village is frustrating. The people here are incredibly generous and the people here can drive you completely mad.

We have breathtaking forests, shocking potholes, extraordinary volunteers, endless opinions, remarkable resilience and just enough eccentricity to keep life interesting. All of those things are true...Perhaps wisdom isn't about deciding which version is correct. Perhaps it's about choosing which version we feed.

Every compliment, complaint, every smile, every sarcastic comment...every conversation over coffee and every Facebook post. Every story we repeat quietly shapes the village we all experience. You might be surprised how often both perspectives can be true.

As always, thank you to every contributor, every photographer, every business, every volunteer, every reader and everyone brave enough to share a piece of themselves with our little mountain newspaper.

Here's to seeing Hogsback from another angle.

*With gratitude and Love,
Miki*

By Community. For Community. On Community.

WHAT GOT US TALKING THIS MONTH

For Local Residents Only

JIKANI

Early in July Jikani made this announcement and it shook community members...

Dear Hogsback Community

It is with great sadness that the Jikani Board finally had to make a definite decision regarding our Jikani "Second Time Around" shop. Due to more second hand items being sold via social media, our much loved project has unfortunately not been able to sustain itself and has ceased to be profitable.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all who have supported our project during the last couple of years.

In order to clear our shop we have planned an exciting clearance sale with prices being advertised from July 13th.

There will be exceptional bargains, so watch this space!

We are in the process to plan a future for our premises and will keep you updated as soon as final decisions have been made.

With gratitude
The Jikani Board



SUCCESS @ SALT

Salt of the Earth ran a fun competition this month. If you popped in and had a go at naming the characters on their latest wooden Art Work, you're already a winner in my eyes. The person with the most creative and funniest names... the **WINNER: LYNN COLLIER** with naming the characters from left to right

1. Budgie
2. Snog
3. Grouchy
4. Snickers
5. Scrooge
- 6 NoseyNorman



2nd PLACE was all the POLITICIANS. Well done and thank you all for the participation.

MARKET MADNESS

Days of our Lives, The Bold and the Beautiful and Santa Barbara don't contain enough drama to compete with our market group. It's not new, they've been a mini-drama-hub for a long time. Now, a guest overheard some disputative tones between two stall holders...

(When I popped in; the market gave me the same feeling as 'depression dundee' next door...Guys; you do not HAVE to be friendly, but it does help your business and influence customers...)



By Community. For Community. On Community.

WHAT GOT US TALKING THIS MONTH

For Local Residents Only

THE HOG & DRAGON: OPENING RECAP & LOOKING AHEAD

Hogsback's newest dining spot, The Hog & Dragon, officially opened its doors last weekend to a bustling crowd of locals and visitors alike. Owners Ruby and Leon expressed their gratitude to the community for the warm response, welcoming the initial feedback as they settle into the village's culinary landscape.

Opening during a peak weekend provided an intense launchpad, which the team embraced to quickly identify operational bottlenecks. "Hitting the ground running at full capacity allowed us to rapidly refine kitchen workflows and service," the owners shared, noting that continuous improvements and staff training are already underway to ensure smooth dining experiences going forward.

Addressing community inquiries regarding seasonality and menu options, Ruby and Leon emphasized their long-term commitment to Hogsback:

- **Sustaining the Off-Peak Season:** The team has planned for year-round operations, with local promotions, cozy winter offerings, and special events tailored to support the establishment through quieter months like August.
- **Expanded Menu Options:** While the opening menu was temporarily adapted following a last-minute kitchen transition, expanded plant-based offerings are actively being developed. The Hog & Dragon aims to feature dedicated vegan and vegetarian dishes alongside their core menu, ensuring a welcoming table for all dietary preferences.

Ruby and Leon invite community members to share their feedback and dish suggestions as they continue refining their offerings. "We want to make every day in Hogsback better than the previous one," they added.

Welcome to the mountain, The Hog & Dragon!

SAPS ARE ON IT

We asked for an update on the now viral VV police video, involving a member of Hogsback's police service. We also enquired if the organisers of Music in the Snow have completed the applications and requested additional security and policing.

As both of these matters are still in progress and under investigation, here's all we could get.

"Thank you for affording us time to respond to your enquiry

Police can confirm that an internal investigation is underway regarding a video circulating on social media.

It is a standard procedure for event organisers to submit an application for risk categorisation for the security cluster to place force deployments.

Kind regards

Captain Majola Nkohli"



CHEF BY TITLE, RUNNER BY HEART

Chef Chippi is gone again, and honestly, good. I am sorry for those who sympathise and feel protective over him. Personally I have seen his lies first hand. As much as he was a great chef and good with his customers; commitment and accountability are not his strongest qualities.

By Community. For Community. On Community.

FORESTBEING FINDS...

FROM THE FOREST FLOOR

If you have been peeling away at your advent calendar, you would realize that we are a few days away from Christmas in July! With the magical winter weather causing the little village to look like a mini factory with all the smoke from the chimneys bellowing small clouds of smoke! Yes indeed we are in the middle of winter! Luckily the days are slowly starting to stretch again, but the temperatures didn't get the same memo!

When wandering in the woods, you will come across quite a few fallen giants, blown down by the flying serpent of these mountains. It is always heartbreaking to see an old giant down on the ground, so many many years standing tall, and then one day, without any warning, down we go to go rest on the floor... truly sad to see.

But knowing how the forest works together, sacrificing themselves for the greater good of others, it does bring a silver lining atleast. And then I read the following folklore: Souls reincarnate as trees to rest for a century after experiencing a traumatic life, and once they are ready again, they will fall to the ground, and rejoin the human population. It makes sense when you come to the mountains and feel the healing energy of the forest, definitely a great place to heal from past trauma. Most definitely worth showing immense gratitude towards the ancient Ents standing in the forests!



Now next time you are in the forest, walking, healing, talk to the trees, tell them your sadness, tell them your joy, share your emotions with them, they understand more than we could ever comprehend.

And like always, only take memories and only leave footprints.

Stay wild.
Adi Forestbeing



FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOPS

Imagine only finding out about our breathtaking hiking trails as you arrive in our magical village, while backpacking through our beautiful country. This was the fate of one pack packing tourist, all the way from Canada!

Just wanting to experience the magic of these mountain, our boy Tom (can't remember his name so Tom it is today) made his way to our front desk and checked in for a memorable stay. And then it happened... a hiking group returning from their 6 day lifechanging adventure, arrived at the front desk for their keys, and I could see Tom's eyes light up! "What is this life changing journey they where all returning from" and the obvious follow up question " where do I sign up?????" And the most dreaded question " when is the next group leaving ????"



After Tom was accommodated, he signed up for the next group leaving and started checking his hiking pack list... he did not have any of the required gear! So the next day he set off on a taxi to see Alice in Dikeni regarding some hiking equipment. Now as almost all locals in Hogsback knows, Alice is not the biggest stockist of reliable hiking equipment, so Tom had to make due with what he had! Food wize the booked group had prepped for months in advance for South Africa's toughest hutted hike! Tom, on the other hand realized that he would need food for the trail, and proceeded to head to our shopping centre in the village, which only consists of a Savemor shop. Knowing he needed protein and energy, Tom proceeded to stock up on eggs and dates for food... 30 eggs to be precise... he boiled all 30 in preparation and soon enough Tom the Canadian, set of with a well prepared Afrikaans hiking group of friends from our northern parts of South Africa. Very intrigued on having a foreigner along for the epic journey, the Hobbits set of on their adventure! Lots of rain and other tribulations presented itself to the group, but they persevered all the way through to day 4! One of the members unfortunately needed to be evacuated, and I headed out to fetch that hiker. When arriving at the cabin, with weather slightly clearing up after 3 days of rain, I informed a delighted group that I could take some of their belongings back to home base with me, and that's when Tom popped his head out... "really? You will do that???" Tom came out with the pair of jeans he started the trail with, still soping wet from day one's rain!!! And he had been carrying it wet in his bag for 4 days, never giving any thought of drying it by the fire at night to ease the weight!! Loading all the wet and dirty belongings into the 4x4, Tom came to me and asked what wild herbs he could use as he had a very constipated tummy and didn't know why... he didn't know why he said... with a straight face he said it! I showed him some wild herbs (FYI Bramble leaves steeped in hot water, helps with mild Digestive issues)

After finishing the hike, I had a chat with the group, and the eggs had turned blue on day 3 already, and everyone started sharing their meals with Tom, while sharing in his egg snacks along the trail, finishing the last eggs on top of Hog 1 mountain on day 6!!! Luckily no one fell ill, but it was a good lesson, hopefully!

Till next time
Adi Forestbeing

MAMMAL MEMOIRS...

Contributed by Dogs of Glory; Billy & Gigi

Mammal Memoirs shares the stories of the animals who pass through our village – sometimes briefly, sometimes forever – always leaving pawprints behind.

A New Beginning: Bringing a Puppy or Kitten Home Life after loss, and the responsibility of welcoming a new companion

Losing a beloved pet leaves an empty space in our homes and our hearts. Eventually, though, many families begin thinking about welcoming a new puppy or kitten into their lives. A new pet is not a replacement for the one we have lost. Every animal is unique, with its own personality, quirks and needs. Instead, bringing home a new companion is the beginning of a completely new relationship – and a commitment that may last 10 to 20yrs.

Before you bring one home

Puppies and kittens are adorable, but they are also hard work. They need time, patience, veterinary care, appropriate nutrition, training and plenty of attention. Before getting a new pet, ask yourself:

- Can I afford routine veterinary care and unexpected emergencies?
- Do I have enough time for exercise, play and training?
- Are my home and garden safe and secure?
- How will I introduce the new arrival to existing pets?
- Who will care for the animal when I am away?

Whenever possible, choose your new companion from a responsible breeder or consider adopting from a reputable rescue organisation. Puppies should ideally remain with their mother and littermates until at least eight weeks of age, allowing them to develop important social skills.

The first weeks with a puppy

When your puppy arrives home, provide a quiet, safe sleeping area and access to fresh water. Puppies sleep a lot – sometimes 18–20 hours a day – so make sure they have plenty of opportunities to rest.

Begin toilet training immediately. Take your puppy outside regularly, especially after waking, eating and playing. Accidents are inevitable, so be patient. Reward good behaviour rather than punishing mistakes.

Puppies also explore the world with their mouths. Keep medicines, chemicals, electrical cables and other dangerous objects safely out of reach, and provide suitable toys for chewing.

Socialisation is equally important. Introduce your puppy gradually and positively to new people, appropriate dogs, household sounds and different environments. Your veterinarian can advise you on safe socialisation while your puppy is still completing its vaccination programme.

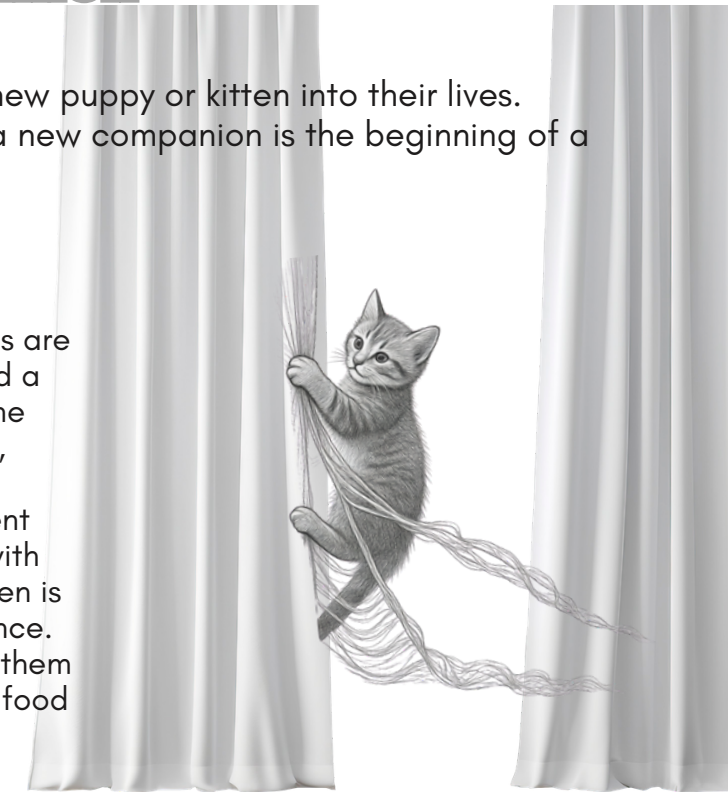
Vaccinations and regular deworming are essential during puppyhood. Your veterinarian will recommend an appropriate schedule based on your puppy's age and local disease risks.



And what about kittens?

Kittens are equally dependent on us for a healthy start. Newborn kittens are born blind and deaf and depend completely on their mother. If you find a tiny kitten alone, don't immediately assume it has been abandoned – the mother may simply be away looking for food. If the kitten is cold, weak, injured or clearly orphaned, seek veterinary advice promptly.

Very young orphaned kittens require specialised care, including frequent feeds with appropriate kitten milk replacer. They may also need help with urination and defecation in their first weeks of life. Hand-rearing a kitten is a major commitment and should ideally be done with veterinary guidance. As kittens grow, they become increasingly curious and playful. Provide them with a warm, safe sleeping area, a litter tray, fresh water, appropriate food and safe toys. A simple cardboard box can often provide just as much entertainment as an expensive toy!



Start their life on the right paw

One of the first things to do after bringing a new puppy or kitten home is arrange a veterinary examination. This allows your veterinarian to assess their health and advise you on vaccinations, deworming, nutrition, parasite prevention, microchipping and sterilisation. If you are not planning to breed responsibly, sterilisation is an important part of pet ownership. Preventing unwanted litters helps reduce the number of animals that end up in shelters or without homes. Discuss the appropriate timing with your veterinarian, as this can vary depending on the animal's breed, size, sex and individual health.

A new story

Perhaps the most important thing to remember after losing a pet is that your new puppy or kitten is not the pet you lost. Don't expect the same personality. Don't compare them. Allow your new companion to become itself. Your previous pet had its own story, filled with memories that will always belong to them. Your new puppy or kitten is about to begin a different story – one that you have the privilege of being part of. Every pet's life eventually comes to an end. But before that day comes, we have the opportunity to give them a life filled with safety, companionship, good health and love.

**If you are ready to open your home again, welcome the new arrival for who they are. You are not replacing an old friend.
You are beginning a new friendship.**

Disclaimer: I will not be editing and removing offensive language or statements. If I chose to publish your vent or letter, it is because you are not the only one upset about the subject matter. Do not read if you are triggered easily.

THE SOUL OF THE HEARTH

Now, in the deep heart of winter, Hogsback wears its oldest face. Mornings arrive wrapped in silver frost, the breath of the forest hangs in the air, and the mountain seems to sleep beneath a blanket of mist. The cold settles into the stones, the trees and the very bones of those who call this place home. It is in these moments, when winter reigns at its fiercest, that the ancient magic of fire reveals itself.

There is an old spirit that walks these mountains. It cannot be seen in the light of day, yet every soul who has called Hogsback home has felt its presence. It awakens with the first frost, whispers through the forests, and waits patiently within every carefully stacked pile of wood. It is the spirit of fire.

Long before electricity chased away the darkness, before glowing screens stole our evenings, there was the hearth. It was here that stories were born, burdens were laid to rest, and weary hearts remembered how to beat a little slower. Fire has never been merely a source of warmth upon this mountain. It is its lifeblood.

There is a line from the film Firelight that has always lingered in the hearts of those who understand the language of flames: "It's a kind of magic. Firelight makes time stand still." It is difficult to imagine a truer description. For anyone who has watched a Hogsback winter settle beyond the windows while a fire crackled nearby, time truly does seem to lose its grip.

The flames dance as though remembering something ancient. They speak in whispers older than language itself, telling stories carried through generations. Every crackle echoes through the room like the mountain drawing another quiet breath. The world outside may be cold and cloaked in mist, but within the circle of firelight, there is peace.

Perhaps that is why fire heals us. It reaches places no medicine can touch. It quiets restless thoughts, eases weary hearts, softens grief and reminds us that stillness is not emptiness, but a gift. Around the hearth we are stripped of life's distractions until only what truly matters remains. We speak more gently. We listen more deeply. We remember who we are.

Leaving Hogsback often reveals what was quietly taken for granted. It is not only the forests, waterfalls or mountain air that are missed. It is the living presence of the hearth. A house may have walls and every modern convenience, yet without a fireplace it can feel as though its soul has wandered elsewhere. Heat can warm the body, but only fire seems able to warm the spirit.

The old mountain folk never believed that a fire was simply lit. They believed it was awakened. Fed with patience, tended with respect and shared with those you loved, it became a guardian of the home, keeping not only the cold beyond the door, but loneliness as well.

"May your woodpile never empty, may your hearth never grow cold, and may the mountain always leave a little fire burning within your soul."

by Seeker of Magic

Disclaimer: I will not be editing and removing offensive language or statements. If I chose to publish your vent or letter, it is because you are not the only one upset about the subject matter. Do not read if you are triggered easily.

BEYOND THE HUG

Yesterday morning, the Hogsback Unity Group (HUG) released the first edition of its new quarterly newsletter, One Village. One Voice.

My first thought? Finally, we’ve been asking for updates and here it is, it's good, it's encouraging. And it's full of people doing genuinely good things. (Although I must admit, a part of me recoiled when reading: “communities are stronger whenwhen information is shared openly”... When I know how much have been withheld in the past. But before we do what Hogsback does best (pull things apart over coffee), let's acknowledge something important.

This village survives because ordinary people continually step in when something needs doing. The Cape Parrot Project has once again demonstrated what commitment looks like. Clearing over 40 kilometres of the Amatola Trail before the Merrell Hobbit Trail Run is no small undertaking. Add their investment in indigenous nurseries, and it's clear they're putting more than words into conservation. Our volunteer firefighters continue to quietly do extraordinary work. Whether responding to runaway fires or protecting homes, they're ordinary residents who simply answer the call. Even more encouraging is their effort to recruit younger volunteers because one day these responsibilities will belong to the next generation.

When our dams dropped to worrying levels, the Water Crisis Task Team didn't wait for someone else to solve the problem. Experienced people shared their knowledge, monitored the situation and helped keep panic at bay.

Mud & Moss Montessori also deserves recognition for creating opportunities for children from different parts of our community to learn together. Sometimes building a village starts long before adulthood. There is plenty to celebrate...But while reading the newsletter, another thought kept creeping in. Why does so much of Hogsback still rely on volunteers? Every few pages there's another story of residents stepping forward. People fixing roads, people monitoring water, people clearing trails? People responding to emergencies and people solving problems? It's inspiring, truly. Yet, it's also worth asking whether this has quietly become normal. Should communities need to organise road repairs themselves? Should businesses and volunteers continually patch municipal infrastructure? We're grateful they do...But are we equally curious about why they have to? Every pothole filled is one less damaged tyre and that's a win.

But it also raises another question, what provision actually exists for maintaining Hogsback's roads? What funding has been allocated? Are these volunteer efforts supplementing municipal work... or replacing it? The newsletter also mentions delays to projects in Esikhululweni because of ward boundary changes...Delays happen, we all understand that. But eventually every delay deserves a timeline. When might residents realistically expect electricity connections? How much longer before promised infrastructure becomes reality rather than planning? And perhaps the question many people quietly ask...Are VIP toilets still considered an acceptable long-term solution in 2026?

Another section celebrates progress between HUG and Amathole Forestry Company. That's genuinely encouraging, relationships matter, co-operation matters... but has either truly been achieved? I know of several people being met with so much red-tape, that the effort to obtain a permit feels equal to not access allowed anyway.

The idea of improving our public spaces around the Arboretum and waterfalls is exciting. But many residents probably don't know what the arbitration between HUG and AFC actually achieved. Did anything change regarding public access? Will future maintenance of these shared spaces involve financial support from AFC or Ranch Timbers? Or will local volunteers continue carrying that responsibility too? Perhaps those answers are already available. Just not in sight.

If so, they would make fascinating reading in a future edition.

The newsletter also touches on changes at Jikani following an incredibly difficult period marked by the loss of respected community leaders. Nobody doubts that organisations evolve. Sometimes they have to. But the closure of the Second Time Around shop, resignation of Norma and Siya leaving... naturally leaves people wondering what changed. What plans are lying in the pipeline and not being discussed? Was it simply time for something new? Or were there financial and operational realities behind the decision that many residents simply don't know about? Likewise, it's wonderful to celebrate students completing training programmes. The next question almost asks itself...What comes afterwards? Can Hogsback realistically provide opportunities that allow those newly qualified people to stay, work and contribute here?

Finally, there's the title itself. One Village. One Voice. It's a beautiful sentiment. I'm just not convinced it's who we are. Hogsback has never been one voice. We're artists and farmers, teachers and foresters, business owners and pensioners, environmentalists and entrepreneurs, old families and new arrivals...Sometimes we agree, Often we don't. All I know is that my voice is not on HUG, because for you to be on/in HUG; you need to be affiliated with some or other committee or alliance in Hogs. Statistically, the majority then, remains voiceless.

Unity doesn't require uniformity, it certainly doesn't require silence. One of the newsletter's closing messages encourages residents to "go to the source" rather than rely on rumour. That's excellent advice. ~~Good~~ TRUE information is always better than gossip.But good information also grows stronger when people feel comfortable asking difficult questions. My questions aren't attacks, they're curiosities and they perhaps they aim to lead by example and encourage more people to pose questions publicly. Questions are how communities learn.

The HUG newsletter deserves credit for highlighting the enormous amount of good happening across our mountain. There is far more kindness, generosity and hard work in Hogsback than many people realise. At the same time, celebrating progress shouldn't mean the conversation ends. If anything, good work invites even better questions and not just a mission to ensure infrastructure ‘stays on the agenda for another 4 years. Maybe true strength in our village lies, not in speaking with one voice... ...but in making sure every voice has somewhere to be heard.

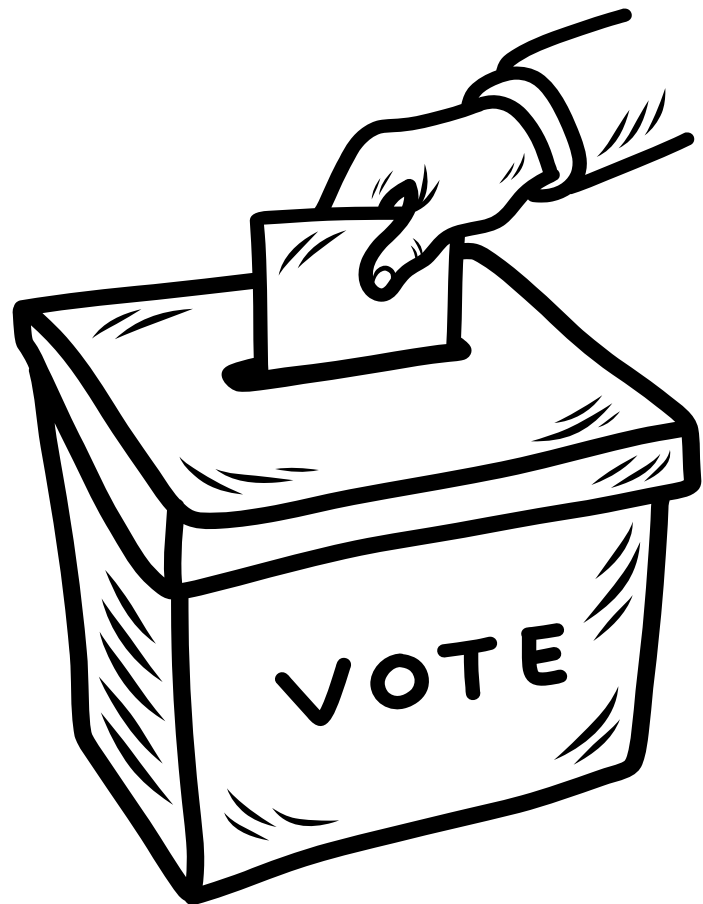
NOMINATE, ELECT AND COME VOTE

We urge all Hogsback residents to take an active interest in the election of the new HTO committee. Please attend, have your say and think carefully about the future direction of tourism in Hogsback.

Tourism affects the whole community, and the decisions made now will shape how Hogsback grows. It is important that people participate before those decisions are made, rather than remaining silent now and complaining about the outcome later.

We need tourism to receive the funding and attention it deserves, while protecting the character, unique aesthetic and natural environment that make Hogsback special.

Francois Rautenbach, HTO Chair Person



Sharing the Warmth: St. Patrick's Mandela Day Winter Drive

In celebration of Mandela Day 2026, the #Stpatrickonthehill congregation came together on 18 July 2026 to distribute nutritious vegetable soup and warm clothing to the greater Hogsback community to combat the cold Hogsback Winter.



The theme 'It is still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity' emphasised the importance of an outreach like this.

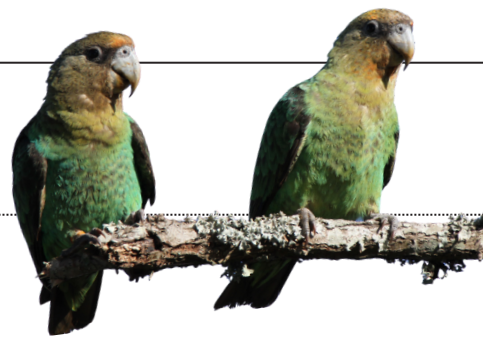
As we read in Isaiah 58:10: 'Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.'

Rev Barry Wittstock and the congregation would like to thank everyone involved in this outreach: those who donated soup ingredients and clothes, the cooks and those who assisted us with distribution.

Thank you, Savemor Hogsback - SPAR, who kindly donated ingredients for the soup.

We also handed out St John's booklets to the community members.

IN THE AIR



Cape Parrot Project

Contributed by Susan and the Team at CPP

“

“Steve’s been coming here since a wee lad. This tree-chopping madness was making him sad

He loves this forest, he loves every tree.

He loves it all just as much as me”

(Lulu & Tee: Russ the High Flyer)

”

Dr Steve Boyes founded the Cape Parrot Project in 2009 – having undertaken his doctoral studies on the Meyer’s Parrot out in the Okavango Delta, he became aware of the plight of South Africa’s only endemic (found only in a particular place) parrot – the Cape Parrot (*Poicephalus robustus*).

He headed to Hogsback to see what could be done and, from that small start, the Wild Bird Trust (WBT) was birthed. The Cape Parrot Project (CPP) was the founding project of the organisation – and here we are, 17 years later, still working in Hogsback, the forests of the former Transkei area and the Magoebaskloof. WBT is a non-profit Trust and public benefit organisation.

Who is the Cape Parrot Project aka CPP?

The vision of the WBT is to keep birds safe in the wild by securing critical habitats for the benefit of wildlife, ecosystems and people in perpetuity. The CPP is focused on conserving the Critically Endangered Cape Parrot (current South African Threatened and Protected Species regulations) as a flagship for the conservation of Afro-temperate forests and related species.

In achieving this, our mission focuses on three key areas to deliver impact:

1. Research and monitoring to establish baselines and track trends for the species and its habitat,
2. Conservation action to act on research findings in particular forest restoration,
3. Awareness outreach, education and partnerships to reach communities with our findings and the possibility of helping with implementation, thereby creating economic opportunities.

Our primary base is in Hogsback where one of the largest populations of Cape Parrots is found and where we employ 20 full-time staff members and facilitate a further 24 contractor positions.

We also have a base in Magoebaskloof, Limpopo (2 full-time staff members) where there is a smaller population of parrots and a support team based throughout the country.



For all those wanting to know “but who are you and what do you do?” – we will be submitting more articles to the HT but you can follow our work on the socials:

<https://www.facebook.com/capeparrotproject>

<https://www.instagram.com/capeparrotproject/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK13Mty-w3USNHtOs1OEpDQ>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cape-parrot-project/>

PS. You can purchase Russ the High Flyer – a book written especially for the CPP – from us directly!

Contact: Susan Wishart (Project Manager)
susan@wildbirdtrust.com 067 416 7219

ON THE GROUND



After three months of planning and preparation, followed by two weeks of hiking around Hogsback hiding secret codes while hoping nobody caught us acting suspicious (including hiking from Madonna with a chicken... don't ask), and from late nights to pet galleries, We thought we'd finally get to relax a bit once the Quest started.

Ha. Not a chance!

We were out there, checking locations, answering questions, and handing out spot prizes.

But hearing everyone's adventures was the best part of it all. From people spending an hour looking for 'silver linings,' searching for 'whispering winds,' and groups wandering around muttering to themselves like they'd lost the plot, to everyone sharing their favourite moments in the Photo Quest albums. Every quester we met couldn't wait to tell us what weird and wonderful paths the quest had led them down and how they saw places they've never seen before.

One of the highlights for us was seeing Questers as young as four years old tackling the riddles and coming to ask us questions, while older couples told us they'd already be back next year with their families to take part again. We even had teams arrive in matching shirts!

So, before we disappear until Halloween, here are this year's winning photos and some of the wonderful feedback we received from the Questers.

Shout-out to Miki, who we kept passing on our secret missions. Between nearly electrocuting herself in the name of Christmas spirit, becoming the designated photographer for half the Christmas in July events, going on bunting patrol, and taking it upon herself to invite Santa (but forgetting to give him directions), she did an amazing job making the town feel festive.

Every year, Hogsback proves that a small village can create something truly special together.



Feedback and Positives

These are just a small selection of the responses we received this year. We know there's no such thing as a perfect event, and there will always be room for improvement. We take every piece of feedback to heart and try our best to make the Quest better each year.

WINNERS



PHOTO QUEST

Quest Action

- * PrawnlygOn
- * Mon
- * Elbie

Landscape And Nature

- * Cold Play the 2nd.
- * Fairytale
- * Arctic Andy

Staying Warm

- * Cold Play the 2nd.
- * Ice, Ice, Maybe!
- * Isicle

Nightlife And Events

- * Nanine
- * Bronkie2
- * Periwinkle of the Winter Woods

Enjoyed Most

The quest and the behaviour of the locals. The played along so well. It was really a joy to participate and meet all.

Other Comments

Experiencing my first winter quest as well as my first Christmas in July was worth every minute spent. I have been to Hogsback on numerous occasions and i finally got my wish to be part of this festivity. Im so excited for next year. The bug has bitten 🐛

Enjoyed Most

The atmosphere was amazing
Loved bingo and everything else that was hosted for the entire weekend...cant wait for next year xxx

Discovered What

Discovered a lot of markets, shops and areas I didn't know about. Also discovered the waterfalls and beautiful scenery.

Enjoyed Most

Discovering new land marks and the excitement behind solving each clue.

Enjoyed Most

The feeling of figuring out a clue and finding it! I liked that it was not too easy. Was super stoked to find the silver lining clue because everyone else was struggling with that one

Enjoyed Most

Meeting new people and seeing how much everyone was helping each other

Discovered What

I have never been to Hogsback before, so it was a fantastic way to explore and discover all ..or at least a lot you have to offer



MAIN QUEST

- * Chilli-PrawnStars
- * Bronkies
- * Berg and Peach
- * Frosty Dumpling
- * Christmas roses
- * Flabbster
- * Carmz
- * Frigid digits
- * Frozen finders
- * Nonsuch seekers
- * Frozen

WINNERS



SIDE QUESTS

Market Quest
The Hoggars!

Kids Quest
Taylor

Art Quest
Chiliporra

Quiz Quest
Bronkies



RAFFLE

- * Frigid digit
- * The Dells
- * Subzero
- * Chacha
- * King Charles
- * Lannister
- * Pretoors

IN THE AIR



For Local Residents Only

Hogsback Horror-Scopes

- **♉ Taurus** – After a heroic effort sampling every mince pie, jalapeno and glühwein on offer, you've officially entered hibernation mode. Your home remains Hogsback's unofficial refuge, where good coffee, warm fires and sensible conversation still exist. You'll emerge eventually... probably when Di mentions fresh pastries or someone says 'snow'.
- **♊ Gemini** – Your social battery is completely flat, yet somehow you still know who flirted, who fought, who cried, who left together, and who definitely shouldn't have. Your quick wit and effortless charm keep Hogsback's long winter nights from becoming unbearably dull. Just remember—not every thought belongs on the community WhatsApp groups.
- **♌ Leo** – Festival season has ended, the tourists have gone home, and you're suffering mild withdrawal from being photographed every five minutes. Thankfully, your infectious enthusiasm and flair keep our little mountain village colourful even on the greyest winter days. Remember: not every moment needs an audience... although you'll probably find one anyway.
- **♈ Aries** – Your post-Christmas in July crash is rapidly turning into irritability, mostly because nobody shares your enthusiasm for planning next month's Jazzy-Fest before you leave. Fortunately, your boundless energy is exactly what keeps Hogsback's events, committees and last-minute miracles alive. If you feel an argument brewing, hike Tor Doone with Adi instead—he's less likely to argue back.

Firewood Levels: Critically low in households that hosted "just a few friends" and hosts that had guests from KZN.

- **♍ Virgo** – While everyone else is recovering, you're mentally auditing missing teaspoons, extension leads and exactly where the budget went. Your attention to detail is the only reason half our community events happen without descending into complete chaos. Try accepting that some Tupperware containers are simply never coming home.
- **♎ Libra** – You spent Christmas in July diplomatically keeping people who weren't speaking to each other pleasantly distracted. Again. Your calm nature keeps Hogsback from becoming a full-contact sport during festival season. This month, try choosing yourself before volunteering to solve everyone else's problems.
- **♏ Scorpio** – You saw absolutely everything that happened over Christmas in July and have wisely chosen to reveal none of it. For now. Your fierce loyalty and uncanny ability to read people make you one of Hogsback's most dependable allies. Your eyebrow, however, continues leaking confidential information.
- **♋ Cancer** – You're still emotionally unpacking Christmas in July while quietly mourning the departure of visitors who briefly restored your faith in humanity. Your gift for making people feel seen and welcome is one of Hogsback's quiet superpowers. Put the kettle on, hug your favourite mug, and wait patiently for the first snow rumours.

- **♐ Sagittarius** – You woke up needing another holiday to recover from your holiday and are already plotting adventures in weather sensible people avoid. Your optimism reminds the rest of us why we choose to live on this beautiful, ridiculous mountain. Please tell at least one person where you're going this time.
- **♑ Capricorn** – You've survived organising, volunteering, cleaning up and fixing everyone else's problems during Christmas in July. Naturally, your reward is another committee meeting before Jazzy-Fest even begins. Hogsback quietly relies on your determination far more than it admits. Stock the woodpile now—you'll be too busy later.
- **♒ Aquarius** – You've already redesigned next year's festival, solved tourism, and developed a revolutionary snow-making concept. Nobody asked, but everyone secretly enjoys watching you think out loud. Your unconventional ideas keep Hogsback evolving instead of standing still. Maybe finish one project before inventing the next.
- **♓ Pisces** – You're wandering through the post-festival mist convinced the mountain is sending you profound spiritual messages. It probably isn't—but your imagination is one of the reasons Hogsback feels magical in the first place. Whether it's destiny or just low cloud, enjoy the mystery.



Hogsback Horror-Scopes

GOSSIP & DRAMA

For Local Residents Only

HOGSBACK SECRETS – THE FINAL FIVE (plus one)

by Fiona Wallace

Here are the final Hogsback Secrets' answers.

1. Which Hogsback author is an illegitimate descendant of King Charles II of England?

Felicity Queen-of-Green Wood

2. Who was a provincial chess player and has published an in-depth academic article on stock car racing?

Jimmy I'm-studying-Hogsback Pieterse

3. Which qualified safari guide duetted with President Kenneth Kaunda on guitar in a (probably) raucous rendition of Willie Nelson?

Francois The-Human-Helpdesk Rautenbach

4. Which IT geek is a dab hand with the sewing machine and loves baking their grandma's recipes?

Janelle I-led-a-wild-life Kidson

5. Who has 50 jumps under their belt and an A license in free-fall skydiving?

Susan Dark-Horse Wishart

6. Who was a teenage poet, drum majorette, and league squash player in high school, then ended up shoveling manure in their first job?

Joanne Poop-to-Pot Campbell

Call to Action

Change is afoot in the pages of The Hogsback Times.

As we say a huge thank you to Fiona for beautifully uncovering our local mysteries in her Hogsback Secrets column, we are officially searching for a new voice (or voices!) to step into the gap she leaves.

Whether you are a seasoned writer, a storyteller, natural detective, cartoonist or someone with a unique local passion, we are completely open to ideas, but here are a few directions we think would thrive:

The Historian & Archivist: Do you love digging into early military surveys, historical cartography, old property boundaries, or the fascinating characters who shaped this mountain before us?

The Attending Reviewer: If you're already at most of Hogsback's live music, group gathering, workshopping and other events... why not tell the mountain what they missed. (So they make sure they go next time)

The Creative or Critic: A regular feature showcasing local art, poetry, mountain authored (we have more authors here than you think) book reviews or profiles on the incredibly talented makers and crafters hidden in our hills.

The Village Chronicler: Capturing the heart of village life—lighthearted reflections on mountain living, community spotlights, or celebrating the quirky elements that make living here so unique.

How to Pitch... Text me, send a voice note or email miki@hbtimes.co.za. You don't need a massive portfolio or qualification. Just a passion for the mountain, a sense of time and understanding of deadlines and a commitment to a monthly column for minimum 3 issues. (Note: HBT remains Hogsback focused – no other town exist, so if you want to write about'Portugal', I'm sorry, this is not for you)

Let's keep our community voice vibrant, diverse and close to home.
Can't wait to see what you come up with!

If we had a Death, Marriage and Birth
Announcement space...

Then it would say; July we had:

One Christening, 2 Weddings and a Funeral

Please tell us about it, allow us to mention names and
let us all celebrate and mourn with you.

CLOSING TIME

Dankie - Enkosi - Thank you

Thank you locals, staff & businesses. Here's just a few of the weekend's heroes. I couldn't get to everyone, but would like to thank you all, every single counts.
(please add your photos to the Facebook Event page.)

For Local Residents Only



Has the **Mountain Officially**
gone to the **Dogs?**

If you have any questions or would like to submit a story/letter/article please email miki@hbtimes.co.za. Cut off is 23rd every month!