



SKCID UPDATE

Portfolio update: **FIRE SAFETY**



Slow Burn, Big Impact: Behind SK's Fire Readiness

As wildfire season approaches, SKCID Chairperson Andy Robertson reflects on the quiet, steady work of the Fire Sub-Committee – and the people behind it.

Joining the Fire Sub-Committee felt like a slow burn – hours walking the breaks, measuring, checking hydrants, logging alien plant growth, capturing drone footage, and compiling risk assessments. Steady, patient work, but a great excuse to be outdoors. The real groundwork was Sergio Capellino's: mapping roles and responsibilities across kilometres of firebreak spanning Navy, SAN Parks, City, and private land – nearly seven months of building contacts and relationships. That's what volunteer work often looks like: quiet effort building into something big. Losing Sergio to Goede Gift is keenly felt, and with the CID board down to three members, I'm deeply grateful to him and to the Fire Sub-Committee – without the foundation they built, starting from scratch would be untenable. A big thank-you too to Gavin Chamberlain, Martin Smolders, Andries Schaap, and Stephen Buck, not just for the hours but for what you bring to the work.

'Sub-committee' sounds official, even bureaucratic – but the SK fire group is anything but. It's dynamic and zero-pressure: people show up, discuss what needs doing, and get to it. Miss a meeting? No problem. Something urgent? We delegate and cover each other. If you've ever thought about joining, don't wait for an invitation – just come along. Over the next few weeks we'll be checking equipment, practicing deployment, and working with the local fire department. Wildfires grow more unpredictable each year – the more you know, the better prepared we all are.

Andy Robertson | SKCID Chairperson

If you would like to find out more: Watch out SK news we'll post when we are doing equipment checks, alternatively please email skcid@simonskloofcid.co.za

SUMMER 2026

WELCOME TO SUMMER IN SIMON'S KLOOF

Fire season is here, and with our unique position against the mountain, being fire-ready isn't optional – it's essential. Inside, you'll find practical tips and advice to be fire wise.

We're also sharing important security updates, so you can head into the summer holidays with peace of mind, whether you're home or away.

And because summer should be about more than just preparation, we've included some local inspiration too.

Here's to a safe, connected, and sun-filled quarter in Simon's Kloof.

BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BY SHARING NEWS OR IMAGES VIA EMAIL TO: simonskloofgazette@gmail.com

NEXT ISSUE OUT IN JANUARY 2027

WHAT'S ON :

19 Nov 2026



Jingle Bell Rock
Café Roux

Holiday show for all the family
Tickets via Quicket

Dec 2026 [date tba]



Switching on of the Christmas Lights
Jubilee Square – Simon's Town

12 Dec 2026



Beatles Tribute Band
Waters Edge
In aid of TEARS
Tickets via Quicket

HERITAGE PROTECTION: WHY IT MATTERS!

Preserving Simon's Kloof – one action at a time

People don't choose to live in Simon's Kloof by accident. It's the gardens, the trees, the low rooflines, the mountain setting, and the sense that homes sit comfortably on their erven rather than crowding every square metre. That character isn't an accident either – Simon's Town has held heritage protection since 1993, now part of the City's Heritage Protection Overlay Zone (HPOZ), designed to stop development from quietly eroding what makes this area distinctive.

How we could lose it

Rarely through one dramatic development – more often through many small ones. A bit more coverage here, a boundary-to-boundary build there, another dwelling added to an erf. Each decision can seem reasonable on its own, but together they can reshape a neighbourhood permanently. Once gardens become buildings and streets become dominated by walls and bulk, that character can't simply be restored.

Character and property value go together

Heritage protection is sometimes framed as a barrier to development, but it's better understood as protecting the very qualities that draw people here – and that underpin property values. A neighbourhood that keeps its distinctive identity stays more desirable than one that gradually looks like anywhere else.

A lesson from Paternoster

Paternoster shows that even a well-known, distinctive village isn't immune to development pressure – its heritage authorities still have to actively scrutinise proposals that threaten its character. The takeaway: a place stays special only if its community keeps protecting it.

Every resident has a role

This isn't about blocking all development – homes need to evolve, and appropriate change should be possible. It's about staying engaged: watch for development notices in the neighbourhood, read them, understand what's proposed, and participate in the public objection process when it matters. A precedent set on one erf, even streets away, can be used to justify similar decisions on yours.



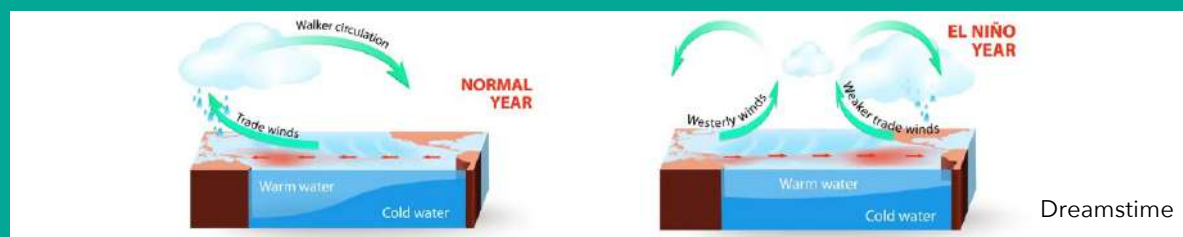
6 THINGS YOU CAN DO

1	WATCH FOR DEVELOPMENT NOTICES Keep an eye out for site notices posted on properties in the neighbourhood, and check the City of Cape Town's planning portal for applications affecting Simon's Kloof.	2	READ BEFORE YOU DISMISS Even if a proposal isn't next door, take the time to understand what's being applied for and whether it aligns with HPOZ principles.
3	OBJECT WHEN IT MATTERS Use the public participation process to raise concerns about proposals that could erode the area's character. Objections carry more weight when residents engage early.	4	GET INVOLVED LOCALLY Connect with the Simon's Town Civic Association or your local ratepayers' group to stay informed and add your voice collectively.
5	SPEAK UP FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD A precedent set today can shape what's allowed tomorrow. Your participation now helps protect every erf in Simon's Kloof, not just your own.	6	DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE The real risk to Simon's Kloof isn't one bad development – it's the slow, cumulative acceptance of many small ones. We have something increasingly rare: a neighbourhood with history, landscape, and a genuine sense of place. Protecting the HPOZ is how we keep it that way – for ourselves, for future generations, and for the homes we've invested in.

EL NINO ...

and the fire risk facing Simon's Kloof this summer

EL NIÑO IS A NATURAL CLIMATE PATTERN WHERE SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURES IN THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC OCEAN RISE SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE AVERAGE.



IT TYPICALLY BRINGS BELOW-NORMAL RAINFALL AND ABOVE-NORMAL TEMPERATURES TO SOUTH AFRICA, INCREASING THE RISK OF DRY SPELLS, HEATWAVES, AND SEVERE PRESSURE ON AGRICULTURE AND WATER SECURITY

South Africa is heading into summer with a strengthening El Niño pattern in place, and the Western Cape government has issued a clear warning: this fire season will be longer, hotter and more dangerous than usual – and Simon's Kloof, tucked against the mountain, is no exception.



What's changing

El Niño's strongest effects are normally felt in the summer-rainfall parts of the country, but provincial authorities have confirmed the Western Cape will also feel it – through higher air temperatures, increased fire risk compounded by a drier winter, and added strain on water resources. Officials have gone further than usual this year: instead of the traditional four-month fire season, the province is now planning around an eight-month fire season, running from October through May, as the risk period stretches well beyond the old December-to-March window.

The numbers behind the warning are sobering

Wildfires already burned through more than 200,000 hectares across the Western Cape during the previous fire season, and the province has allocated around R12 million for the 2026/27 fire season, with 24 firefighting aircraft on standby to respond within the first hour of a blaze breaking out.

Why this matters for us

Premier Alan Winde's message was blunt: "Where you live right now matters. If you know that there is a fire risk in the region where you live, now is the time to prepare... perhaps surrounded by alien vegetation, now is the time to trim, cut, and ensure we're mitigating that risk."

For Simon's Kloof, that's not a hypothetical

Our position against the mountain, with dense vegetation and homes close to the fynbos edge, puts us squarely in the kind of area officials are asking residents to prepare early. Provincial climate data also points to a broader shift: the Western Cape is experiencing more hot days, fewer cold days, declining autumn rainfall and greater variability in wind conditions – and 2025 alone saw wind speeds well above average, the exact conditions that turn a small spark into a fast-moving fire.

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF : see next page ...

FIREBREAK CHECKLIST

DO THIS BEFORE THE HEAT ARRIVES

	CLEAR A DEFENSIBLE SPACE	remove dry vegetation, leaf litter and dead branches within at least 1.5m of your house, walls, and fences
	CUT BACK ALIEN VEGETATION	pinus, gums, and other invasive species burn hotter and faster than indigenous fynbos; clear them from your boundary first
	TRIM OVERHANGING BRANCHES	keep tree canopies clear of roofs, gutters, and power lines
	CHECK YOUR GUTTERS AND ROOF	clear leaf debris that can catch embers in high wind
	STORE FIREWOOD AND GAS BOTTLES AWAY FROM THE HOUSE	at least 10m from any structure
	KNOW YOUR EVACUATION ROUTE	identify two ways out of the neighbourhood and agree a meeting point with your household
	PACK A GO-BAG	documents, medication, water, and essentials, ready by the door
107	SAVE EMERGENCY NUMBERS	Fire & Rescue, SAPS, and your neighbourhood watch, stored where you can find them quickly

Images: various/google

THE ADVICE FROM OFFICIALS IS PRACTICAL, NOT ALARMIST.

Clear defensible space around your home, cut back alien and overgrown vegetation, check that your fire kit and evacuation plan are current, and don't wait until the first heatwave to act.

As one provincial summary put it, the goal is simple:

- clear the fuel
- watch the warnings
- use water carefully,
- and do the boring preparation before the south-easter turns one spark into a very expensive afternoon

SEE MORE INFO ON PREPARING YOUR HOME AT:

https://simonskloofcid.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/WildfireReady_GENERAL_INFO_2024.pdf

FIRE DANGER INDEX

Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red
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The Fire Index [FD] in South Africa is a national 5-category rating system managed by the South African Weather Service to evaluate daily wildfire risk.

It calculates a numerical score from 0 to 100 based on a combination of current temperature, relative humidity and wind speed.

Each score is colour-coded and dictates clear precautionary laws and operational safety limits.

The Simon’s Kloof CID fire sub-committee will post HIGH & HIGH EXTREME ratings on the SOCIAL and URGENT WhatsApp groups as and when relevant

FIRE DANGER INDEX (FDI) RATING FOR WILDFIRE (VELD, FOREST & MOUNTAIN FIRE)

INDICATIVE COLOUR	BLUE	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
DANGER RATING	Insignificant	Low	Moderate	High	High - extreme
FIRE PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS MEASURES	No precaution is needed	Fires including prescribed burns may be lit, used or maintained in the open air on the condition that persons making fires take reasonable precautions against the fires' spreading.	No fires may be allowed in the open air (unless in designated fireplaces), except those that are authorised by the Fire Protection Officer where a Fire Protection Association exists, or elsewhere, by the Chief Fire Officer of the local Fire Service.	No fires may be allowed under any circumstances in the open air.	No fires may be allowed under any circumstances in the open air and Fire Protection Associations and municipal Disaster Management Centres must invoke contingency fire emergency and disaster management plans including extraordinary readiness and response plans. All operations likely to ignite fires halted. Householders placed on alert.
APPLICATION OF THE NATIONAL VELD & FOREST FIRE ACT			Above precautionary measure to be prescribed.	Section 10(1)(b) applies: no person may light, use or maintain a fire in the open air.	Section 10(1)(b) applies: no person may light, use or maintain a fire in the open air.
FIRE BEHAVIOUR	Fires are not likely to ignite. If they do, they are likely to go out without suppression action. There is little flaming combustion. Flame lengths in grassland and plantation forest litter lower than 0,5 m and rates of forward spread less than 0,15 km per hour.	Fires likely to ignite readily but spread slowly. Flame lengths in grassland and plantation forest litter lower than 1m and rates of forward spread less than 0,3 km per hour.	Fires ignite readily and spread rapidly, burning in the surface layers below trees. Flame lengths in grasslands and plantation forests between 1 and 2m, and rates of forward spread between 0.3 and 1.5 kilometres per hour.	Fires ignited readily and spread very rapidly, with local crowning and short-range spotting. Flame lengths between 2 and 5 m, and rates of forward spread between 1.5 and 2.0 kilometres per hour.	Conflagrations are likely in plantation forests, stands of alien invasive trees and shrubs, sugar cane plantations, and fynbos. Long range fire spotting is likely in these fuel types. Rates of forward spread of head fires can exceed 4.0 kilometres per hour and flame lengths will be in the order of 5 – 15 m or more.

FireIndex is another active site that combines today's South African Fire Danger Index (FDI), local fire weather, recent rainfall, five-day forecasts and NASA satellite detections into one clear view for faster, safer decisions.
www.fireindex.co.za

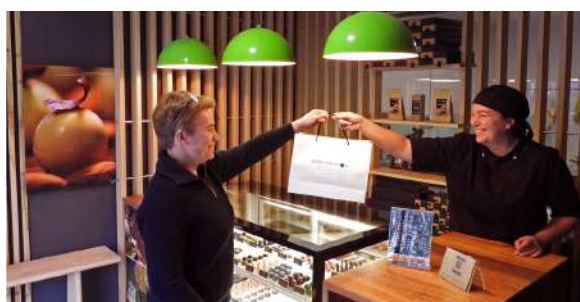
HANDCRAFTED CHOCS: SEVEN HEDGEHOGS

The Sweet Rise of Seven Hedgehogs Chocolatier

It all began over a lunch table in 2020, when Covid had shut down the film industry Meike worked in as a camera operator. With time on her hands, she started making chocolate truffles at home, and her sister suggested she sell them. The two set about naming the venture, agreeing that hedgehogs – a shared childhood obsession born from midnight torch-lit searches in their aunt's garden – had to feature somewhere. After battling around three, then four, they landed on seven, simply because it sounded right. Meike taught herself the craft through long, hard self-training, learning to truly understand chocolate, and what started as a hobby grew into a side hustle worked from home. It has now blossomed into a little shop in Simon's Town, where Meike is thrilled to welcome visitors in person.

Visit: Unit 4, 5 Wickboom Ln, Simon's Town, or online at sevenhedgehogschocolatier.co.za.

WHAT'S
UP ...
DOWN
TOWN



WATERWISE

El Niño is going to dictate that we conserve water more so than usual



Indoor and Household Habits to adopt

Capture shower warm-up water

- Place a bucket under the showerhead while you wait for hot water, then use it on plants or toilets.

Plug the sink

- Fill a washing-up bowl or plug the sink when rinsing vegetables or washing hands instead of letting the tap run.

Fix slow leaks

- Repair dripping taps right away to stop dozens of wasted litres a day.

Run full loads

- Only turn on your dishwasher and washing machine when they are completely full.

Smart Garden Tips to guide you

Water early or late

- Irrigate your garden before 9:00 AM or after 4:00 PM to stop the sun from evaporating the moisture.

Apply thick mulch

- Cover bare soil with bark, gravel, or compost to keep the ground cool and hold onto water.

Group plants by needs

- Create hydrozones by planting species with matching water requirements close together.

Choose indigenous plants

- Swap thirsty exotic plants for local, drought-resistant varieties that survive on natural rain.

Raise your lawn mower

- Let your grass grow a bit taller so it shades the soil, develops deeper roots, and stays green longer.

60% keeps the night watch vehicle on our Simon's Kloof roads

This number decides whether our dedicated patrol vehicle keeps working through the night.

Right now, we are at 63%



Drop below 60%, and the patrol vehicle doesn't scale down – it stops. Alarm response slows, and the street outside your gate is quieter in the wrong way.

For a decade, a small, persistent group of residents has quietly shaped what makes Simon's Kloof feel different: fewer break-ins, faster responses, streets you can walk at night without a second thought. None of it happens automatically – it happens because residents chose to opt in or renew contracts. The dedicated night patrol vehicle patrolling our roads every night, 6pm to 6am, was provided by ISS Tactical for ten years before the business was sold, and for the past five months by Mach1. It isn't funded by a levy or mandated by the SKCID. It exists purely because enough households – **at least 60%** – are contracted with Mach1 for private monitoring and armed response. That threshold is the whole engine. As an added benefit, Mach1 also offers a nighttime meet and greet service at your home, should you need it.

THE ASK

We're not asking anyone to sign up out of pressure – only out of clear-eyed self-interest, aligned with the community's. A contract with Mach1 buys you private monitoring and armed response for your own property, **and it keeps** a shared night patrol patrolling every street in Simon's Kloof, including yours. Please note: the SKCID cannot negotiate contracts or endorse a single provider – this initiative is driven by concerned residents, independently of the SKCID's mandate. You remain free to choose any provider.

If you haven't decided on your security provider or your existing contact is up for renewal, please contact Robin Goveia of Mach 1 today (079 803 2120 /rob@mach1.co.za).

WHICH WHATSAPP GROUP FOR WHAT ...
Navigating the WhatsApp groups of Simon's Kloof

SK - Urgent	SK - Social	SK - Marketplace	SKCID NEWS	Mach 1 SK Communication
Urgent matters ONLY	Anything you want to say ... within reason	Buy & sell household items	CID news and updates	Mach 1 Security clients ONLY

THE SK WEEKEND BREAK INSPIRATION

SERENITY DOME @ POM' GRATZ



Book via: LekkeSlaap

Accommodates 2 guests and is tastefully furnished with a queen-size bed. En-suite bathroom fitted with a shower and waterless toilet. Crip linen and towels are provided. The unit has a kitchenette with a bar fridge, a 2-plate stove, basic cutlery, crockery, and tea- and coffee-making facilities and features a seating area.

The unit opens up to a lovely deck with a hammock, bath, and private braai facilities, overlooking the farm. The farm features a labyrinth, perfect for those who enjoy exploring. Guests can also take leisurely strolls through the Renosterbos or cycle around the property, making the most of the serene natural surroundings

Serenity Dome @ Pom' Gratz is situated on a unique and eco-friendly farm offering self-catering accommodation near Tesselaarsdal, 35 kms from Stanford.

This off-the-grid haven is tucked away in the midst of renosterbos and pomegranate orchards, boasting a pet-friendly environment where guests can enjoy walks and stargazing at night.

THE SK BOOK NOOK

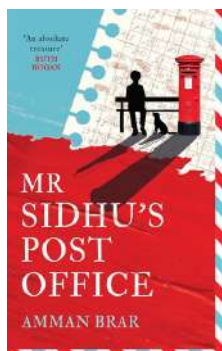


BELLA'S KITCHEN

- Isabella Niehaus [2026]

'The beautifully photographed chapters reflect the recipes that best complement this journey': Wordsworth

In its essence, Bella's Kitchen is a love letter, to those people important in her life, and to herself. Yes it's a cookbook, but it's also more than just another book of recipes built around a theme. Delicious, instinctive, adventurous and unique - just like Bella herself.



MR SIDHU'S POST OFFICE

- Amman Brar [2026]

'...moving family drama ... if you don't fall in love with Mr Sidhu, as I did, then I can't help you!'
: BBC News: 12 Books to Read in 2026

Mr Sidhu is confidant, caretaker and witness to a community revealing itself in its loyalties and secrets. Tender, wise and beautifully observed, Mr Sidhu's Post Office is an unforgettable novel about love, duty and the communities that shape us - and save us

NUMBERS TO SAVE

COCT FIRE CONTROL:

021 590 1900 or
107 from a landline or
021 480 7700 from a cell

SIMON'S TOWN FIRE:

021 400 3908

NEXT ISSUE:

January 2027

CONTENT DEADLINE:

27 November 2026

SUBMIT CONTENT TO:

simonskloofgazette@gmail.com