

# Joyful Night as Brixton lights up

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Fried Wilsenach - Photo@Chris Duys

Brixton, Johannesburg once again lit up for a fabulous community event, bringing together residents, artists, and supporters in a vibrant celebration of community and creativity.

The Working Dog's Fried Wilsenach called on the help of friends from Gearhouse Splitbeam and DWR Distribution to light up the neighbourhood he proudly calls home.

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Debates and Da Beats. Photo @Chris Duys

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“Brixton is a historic suburb located west of Johannesburg’s city centre,” said Fried. “Established in 1902 on land once part of the Langlaagte farm, it was named after the London suburb. Built on the Witwatersrand ridge—the watershed of South Africa—it offers panoramic views of Johannesburg. For over a decade Brixton has hosted community events that bring people from all walks of life, and all ages and stages, into the same space with one goal: to co-create joyful memories.”

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Sentech Tower - Photo @Chris Duys

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This event, Debates and Da Beats, was conceived to invigorate critical discourse and foster genuine community engagement. Organised by the Campaign for Free Expression and the Brixton Community Forum, it sought to bring important political, social, and economic conversations out of traditional academic settings and into accessible, welcoming spaces, this time, the local park —ensuring inclusivity and broader participation. Throughout the afternoon and into the evening, attendees enjoyed live performances from DJ Charles Leonard, DJ Chibukurenga, Gift Nworie, Wiebke Holm, and the Field Band Foundation, creating a lively atmosphere that celebrated community, culture, and collective voice.

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Photo @Chris Duys

And, as has become tradition, the Sentech Tower lit up the skyline once again.

Standing 237 meters tall, the Sentech Tower was completed in 1962 and was once the tallest man-made structure in Africa. While its observation deck closed in 1982, its presence continues to loom large over the city.

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Benjamin Mills

This year the programming was by Benjamin Mills. “We were lucky to have four Robe i-Fortes, two Tarantulas, and a mighty Robe i-Bolt,” says Fried. “The impressive i-Bolt added something special, and DWR also provided an MA3 command wing for programming also assisting—definitely a step up with more control and flexibility.”

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DWR's Jaques Pretorius and Benjamin Mills

Fried noted the ongoing challenge of funding. "Hosting these events on a tight budget is tough. Long-term support is key. Gearhouse Splitbeam's involvement is invaluable, and DWR Distribution, this year represented by Jaques Pretorius and Chris Duys, has been with us since we first lit the Tower in 2022. Both companies see value in what we do and believe in this community."

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Photo @Alet Pretorius

These gatherings are more than just events —they are a meeting point for ideas, music, and connection in a space that is welcoming and open to all. And they leave residents feeling safer and happier.

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And for those curious about local history, Brixton offers plenty. The Brixton Cemetery, established in 1912, became Johannesburg's main burial site and is home to the graves of Randlords, unionists, and soldiers. It also houses Africa's first Hindu crematorium, built in 1908 and organised by Mahatma Gandhi. The Brixton Ridge was a key location during the 1922 miners' strike in Johannesburg, also known as the Rand Revolt, where fierce fighting took place between strikers and government forces. Kingston Frost Park, originally Brixton Park, was established in 1925 and renamed in 1939. It features a WWI memorial beacon and remains a vital public space for the community where many of the Brixton events are held.

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Photo @Alet Pretorius

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**Photos by Chris Duys and Alet Pretorius**