

ALWAYS A GREEN CAPITAL

LOOKING BACK ON FIVE YEARS OF GREEN CAPITAL





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FOREVER GREEN CAPITAL

It has been five years since Nijmegen, the oldest city in the Netherlands, held the title of Green Capital of Europe in 2018. A lot has happened in those five years, and the urgency of investing in a sustainable world and combating climate change is becoming ever more apparent across the globe.

We still look back with pride at Nijmegen European Green Capital 2018. The green movement in Nijmegen received a boost in 2018 that is still noticeable today, five years later. In Nijmegen and also throughout the region. We are taking major steps to further green the city and region, we are working hard on the energy transition, and the circular economy is rapidly taking shape. The incredible commitment of our residents, entrepreneurs, institutions and organisations to realise an attractive sustainable future for all is heartening and continues to inspire many. As far as I am concerned, this commitment is the most important legacy of Nijmegen European Green Capital. In this Five-Year Report, we therefore choose to give the floor to the many people who work every day to make our city and region more sustainable. They share how the Green Capital year has contributed to an inclusive approach to sustainability, how various kinds of organisations are now working together on circularity, how the initially unwelcome arrival of wind turbines in a small community eventually led to sustainable collaboration. You can read the stories of sustainable doers, our true capital. They give us a hopeful impression of how Nijmegen, forever Green Capital, remains on course for an attractive sustainable future for us all. I wish you much reading pleasure.

Hubert Bruls

Mayor of Nijmegen, European Green Capital 2018

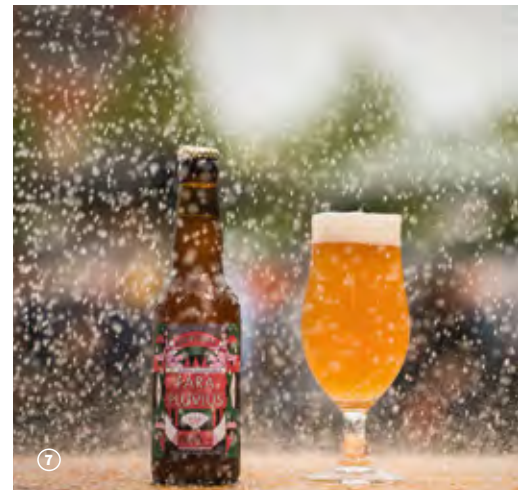
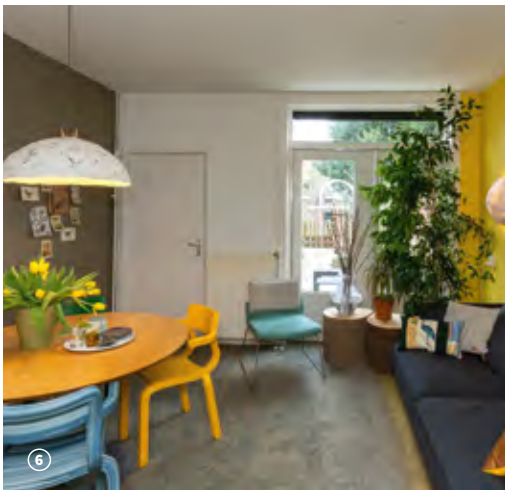
Top 3 best known activities



AND THERE'S MORE...

- ④ Within the Waste theme, Green Capital Challenges embraces the Walk of Waste art walk with artful waste bins on the Waalkade, 2018.
- ⑤ Sustainability Café Nijmegen, with the late board member Irene Dankelman.
- ⑥ The first circularly designed social housing unit of the Netherlands opens in Nijmegen, 30 January 2018.
- ⑦ Festive opening of the first keg of Parapluvius beer, brewed with Nijmegen rain water, 5 July 2018.
- ⑧ On a visit to Nijmegen European Green Capital, King Willem-Alexander tests a circular bench, 4 July 2018.
- ⑨ Launch of the Kleurrijk Groen (Colourful Green) Network, intended to reach out to inhabitants from various backgrounds, 2018.

Source: Nijmegen European Green Capital, 4 jaar later. Stadspanel over duurzame veranderingen en European Green Capital (Nijmegen European Green Capital, four years later. City panel on sustainable changes and European Green Capital) (see also pp. 38 and 39)





HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Spiegelwaal Concert, 20 June 2018.
- 2 Building a willow hut during Green Friday, 14 December 2018.
- 3 Award ceremony at De Vereniging with Navarone, 21 June 2018.
- 4 Wondertuin Opening Festival, 19 to 21 January 2018.
- 5 Bertrand Piccard, initiator of the Solar Impulse Foundation, at the international EcoProcura conference on sustainable procurement, 3 to 5 October 2018.
- 6 Signing of a Call for Action for improving sustainability in cities by 22 European cities, 23 November 2018.
- 7 Mayor Hubert Bruls receives the Green Capital fold-out book from Thomas Kufen, Mayor of Essen, European Green Capital 2017, and officially opens the Green Capital year, 20 January 2018.
- 8 Opening of museum for natural and cultural history De Bastei, 19 and 20 May 2018.





CILIA DAEMEN AND TOBIAS VAN ELFEREN

Cilia Daemen has been alderwoman at the Municipality of Nijmegen since 2022. She is responsible for wellbeing, health, inclusion, mobility, climate adaptation, and urban greening.

Tobias van Elferen has been alderman at the Municipality of Nijmegen since 2022. He is responsible for finance, sustainability (energy and environment), cultural heritage, digitalisation and ICT, human resources, and organisation.

• Alderman **Tobias van Elferen** and Alderwoman **Cilia Daemen** are proud of the European Green Capital Award. *Photo: Jan Willem de Venster*

Aldermen look back on five years since Green Capital:

‘HOW DO WE GET THE WHOLE CITY TO PARTICIPATE?’

Nijmegen was the European Green Capital in 2018. It took three attempts to bring the title to the city, but in 2016, in Ljubljana, Nijmegen's efforts were finally rewarded. How did then councillors and current aldermen Cilia Daemen (GroenLinks) and Tobias van Elferen (D66) experience this period? And how do they view the impact of the Green Capital year now?

Cilia Daemen remembers well the tension on the night the results were announced. “What I remember especially was the contact moment with Harriët Tiemens (then alderwoman for sustainability, Eds.), when she said: ‘Yes, we won!’ Of course, as a councillor, we were also aware of some of the preparation: the pitch held in Ljubljana, the Nijmegen residents who had travelled there by bus, and some even by bike, to support the Nijmegen delegation. But also how much work it was to win the title. It was quite a process.”

Pride

During the first attempt, in 2014, Tobias van Elferen, then a councillor, walked for a while with the supporters. “As we walked, we could feel the tension growing. We felt we were all contributing to making it a success.” When the third attempt succeeded, in 2018, he mostly felt pride. “Sustainable, circular, green ambitions have always been high on the agenda in Nijmegen. Then suddenly you get recognition for this as a sustainable capital. You’re the Green Capital of Europe!” As a councillor, but

also as a resident, Daemen wanted to experience what this kind of title actually meant. “How do you get the whole city involved? That, of course, was also the debate within the municipal council. I attended a number of activities myself. For example, I went to a meeting on gardening advice. Also to find out: where does the time and money go?”

Hugely topical

Van Elferen adds: “The intention and ambition was high to get people involved. And that is still hugely topical today. We are both still busy every day with how we can get the whole city to participate. How do we make sustainability, greening, and circularity something that everyone feels connected to?” According to Daemen, residents still

‘Seeds were planted in **2018**’

rightly use the title won in 2018 to remind the municipality of its responsibility. “We were chosen as the Green Capital for a reason, because we were already hugely engaged with these themes.

We had the opportunity to celebrate this, and some projects were given an extra boost. People also use it as an argument in discussions: you are the Green Capital, so why not do this?”

Natural gas-free and insulation

Or, as Van Elferen puts it: “Make it happen. Noblesse oblige.” He himself still sees plenty of the Green Capital’s impact in Nijmegen. “Take that trophy, which is on display in the hall of the Town Hall. And projects like natural gas-free neighbourhoods and insulation would really have looked very different without the Green Capital title.” The ambitions are high: Nijmegen aims to be natural gas-free by 2045, while the national target is 2050. “In this process, every resident matters. If you can do this under the Green Capital flag, it creates recognition. You are working towards an ideal together.”

He also says that the Green Capital title played a major role in bringing the raw materials crisis into sharper focus. “It has ensured that many circular opportunities are now getting off the ground. Think about circular construction; we are incredibly busy with that, both here and in the wider region.* We can do this now because we planted that seed then. Apart from the CO2 crisis, we also have a raw materials crisis. You can see that circular initiatives are really emerging from the Green Capital year.”

Daemen also sees in her portfolio clear examples of initiatives that have arisen from the Green Capital year. “Take urban agriculture, community gardens in neighbourhoods, and the opening of the new food counter in Nijmegen. There are many such initiatives, often coming from residents or social enterprises, which we can support with grants. If

you can help these projects along, you also have a group of people committed to action in the long term.”

Join in

She says residents can also easily contribute to climate adaptation, thanks to campaigns like Operatie Steenbreek, which was launched in 2018. “A great example of very concrete things like removing garden tiles, gardening advice, disconnecting rain pipes, and creating façade gardens,” says Daemen. “If you want to join in, these are your options. And we can even support you with it.” She is enthusiastic about how different resident groups are being approached. “I think that is also something we learned from the Green Capital year. That different things work for different people.”

Sustainable mobility

Clean air is also an important but more abstract topic, says Daemen. “During the Green Capital year, we signed a manifesto for cleaner inland navigation, and it is still working today. For example, it was recently announced that a nationwide ban on degassing while sailing would take effect from next July.” Furthermore, 2018 saw the emergence of eHubs. “This in fact marked the start of shared mobility in Nijmegen,” Van Elferen says. Daemen nods in agreement. “Shared mobility was really put on the map during that year. There is also more support for it in Nijmegen than in some other cities; many residents already choose for shared mobility on their own initiative.” Van Elferen adds: “Being the third city in the Netherlands in terms of housing shortage, this is no idealised vision; it’s the only way we can make it work.”

Education and inclusion

Daemen also mentions Nijmegen’s educational institutions, Radboud University and HAN University of Ap-

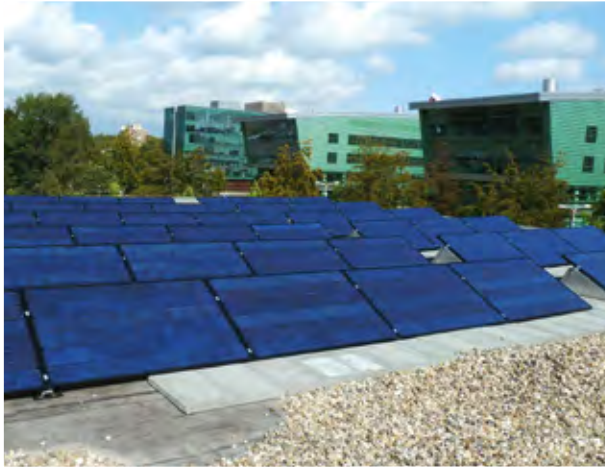
plied Sciences, which are increasingly embedding sustainability in their study programmes. “Radboud University has even integrated sustainability in all its study programmes.” Van Elferen also mentions the ROC. “They want to prepare their MBO students in their technical study programmes for the transition. And we desperately need these students in the transition. The labour market is perhaps one of the biggest bottlenecks when it comes to accelerating sustainability.”

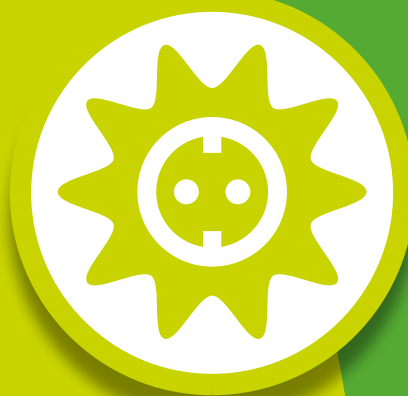
Inclusivity was also a key point of focus in 2018. “If you want everyone to be able to participate in the fight against climate change, you need to include groups of people who are not naturally part of those green networks. That is why we created the Kleurrijk Groen (Colourful Green) Network (see also pages 18 and 19, Eds.). It was also really needed, because otherwise the theme would have been limited to a small group of people.”

On the map

Nijmegen has put itself on the map as the sustainable capital of Europe. This became clear once again when the BBC wrote a laudatory article on *The progressive city that few know*. Will Nijmegen continue to profile itself as a Green Capital, or rather as a sustainability leader? “We don’t have to choose between the two,” says Van Elferen. “We just keep raising that flag. And we continue to fight under it. At some point, it becomes increasingly difficult to prove that what we are doing stems from the Green Capital title, but let it just be the flag under which we fight, and of which we are proud.” •

*Since 2021, there has been regional cooperation between 18 municipalities in the Arnhem-Nijmegen Green Metropolitan Region. Stemming in part from Nijmegen’s year as Green Capital, circularity is one of this regional cooperation’s five core tasks.





ENERGY TRANSITION

Nijmegen energy-neutral, that's where we want to be in 2045! This means aiming for a fully sustainable energy supply and natural gas-free neighbourhoods by 2045, in the long run generating as much renewable energy in the region as we use. This requires commitment from the municipality, residents, and businesses. And it calls for smart solutions.



• **Koos Nijssen**, secretary of the Leefbaar Reeth neighbourhood association. *Photo: Erik van 't Hullenaar*

Koos Nijssen on the quality of life in the hamlet of Reeth:

‘NOT JUST THE BURDENS, BUT ALSO THE JOYS’

“It’s really beautiful here, and we have a great and close-knit neighbourhood.” Koos Nijssen enjoys living in the hamlet of Reeth, just north of Nijmegen. But his joy at living there has also been repeatedly challenged to a significant degree, says the secretary of the Leefbaar Reeth (Liveable Reeth) neighbourhood association. Initially, hamlet residents opposed the creation of the Nijmegen-Betuwe wind farm. Now they are joining forces with the wind farm instigators to realise their own solar farm, by and for Reeth residents.

Koos Nijssen moved from the Flevopolder to Reeth in the Overbetuwe municipality 12 years ago. “A lovely close-knit neighbourhood where people help each other when needed,” is how Nijssen describes the small community. When he first moved to Reeth, it was already known that a wind farm might eventually be built nearby, on Nijmegen territory. “I was personally quite used to

wind farms; there are hundreds of wind turbines in the Flevopolder. As a result, I wasn’t so worried that the distance from our house, at least 600 metres, would turn out to be a problem.” But when the four wind turbines started operating in late 2016, the closest turbine was found to be problematic after all. When the sun was low, the blades cast a shadow over the house. “We couldn’t

WIND FARM AND SOLAR FARM

The Nijmegen-Betuwe wind farm has four wind turbines with a height (including blades) of 150 metres. The wind farm is located on Nijmegen territory and has been providing renewable energy for over 7,000 households per year since the end of 2016. In 2021, the four wind turbines were supplemented with De Grift solar farm, with over 11,000 solar panels. Enough to provide renewable energy to 1,475 households a year. Like the wind farm, De Grift solar farm is owned by citizens.

even read the paper; it was making us crazy." The turbines were adjusted differently, and this particular problem was solved. "I hardly notice the wind turbines now. But that is not everyone's experience in the neighbourhood, mind you. Some people hear a continuous low hum that is very disruptive."

Going out for a beer

When it became clear that the wind farm was definitely going to be built, residents made agreements with the developers prior to construction. According to Nijssen, this was done in a pleasant atmosphere. "We disagreed with each other, but we still went out for a beer together after the talks." It was agreed that all households within 650 metres of a wind turbine would receive €10,000 in compensation if they did not file an individual planning compensation claim. All but one of the residents took advantage of this arrangement at the time.

Good neighbours

The two parties also agreed that the shadow cast by the blades would be reduced to zero. Usually, these agreements are much more lenient: a maximum of 17 days a year, and a maximum of 20 minutes at a time. The wind farm also set up an environmental fund that makes a positive contribution to the liveability in the vicinity of the Nijmegen-Betuwe wind farm. "The Dutch national guideline is that wind farms put 50 cents per megawatt-hour they produce into an environmental fund. That is also what happens in our case," says Nijssen, "except that the Nijmegen-Betuwe wind farm has increased the amount to one euro per megawatt hour." Why does the wind farm pay twice as much? "Because they want to be good neighbours. And because they understand very well that they are causing nuisance in the neighbourhood, I think." Reeth has used the environmental fund to finance a

WIND FARM ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

The environmental fund of the Nijmegen-Betuwe wind farm provides subsidies for projects and initiatives in the field of sustainability, energy saving and renewable energy, quality of life, and social cohesion. Reeth is one of four residential areas to which the environmental fund is disbursing money. The hamlet received funding during the first round of applications (autumn 2018) for three neighbourhood Corten steel nameplates, and an initial contribution towards the costs of installing fibre optics. With the money pledged from the last round (autumn 2022), residents have purchased an AED device and 18 of them have undergone CPR training. Some money has also been pledged for a communal space at the planned cooperative solar field of Reeth.

number of initiatives (see box). Reeth residents have in the meantime also become involved in the wind farm themselves. "When the wind farm welcomes visitors from other municipalities, we are often invited to come and talk about our perspective as residents. How we feel about how things went, and how we think they are going now. That is an area in which we work together with the wind farm. In fact, one of our local residents is now the manager of the wind farm's visitor centre."

Fair

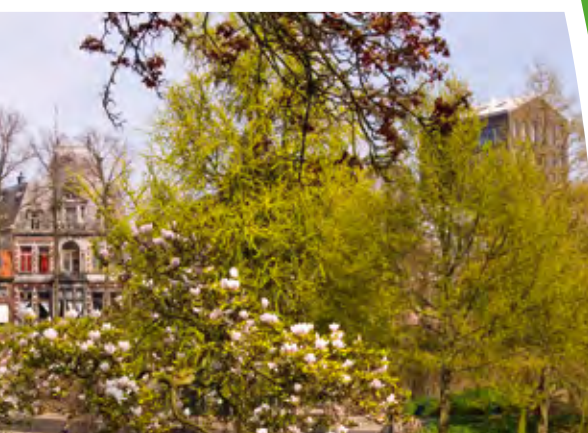
According to Nijssen, the way the wind farm has dealt with local residents has made it possible for the hamlet to live with the wind turbines. "Some neighbours are really bothered by it, and that is a terrible thing. But while many residents would still prefer not to have a wind farm in their backyard, the majority can live with it. It is no longer a breaking point." The good agreements, but also the environmental fund, play an important role in this. "It's not fair to just have other people make money in your neighbourhood; why shouldn't the neighbourhood also benefit? We feel very strongly about this," says Nijssen, not only in reference to the wind farm, but also to other developments close to Reeth. He mentions the large solar farm currently under construction, as well as the possible construction of a rail terminal,

which he strongly opposes. "We are apparently seen as the cesspit of Overbetuwe, a great place to dump all sorts of projects, and at some point, you've just got to say 'stop!'"

Their own solar farm

Meanwhile, the hamlet is setting up its own 5-hectare solar farm. "We actually found it too crazy that we as a hamlet get all the burdens, without the joys. So we also wanted to enjoy some of the perks. And we wanted to contribute to the energy transition," says Nijssen. "We live in a neighbourhood with some older houses that are difficult to make more sustainable. And of course, if we do want to contribute something, having our own solar farm would be really nice." Reeth residents raised the initial capital for research and permit application, and established a cooperative. By now, the Overbetuwe municipality has issued a permit for the construction of the Reethse Veld solar farm. "We hope to start construction this year," says Nijssen. "Since we are on good terms with the co-developer of the wind farm, Pim de Ridder from Wiek-II, we are now also working with him to develop our solar farm." This makes the future solar farm a great example of how parties that were initially opposed to each other end up working together towards the energy transition. •





VITAL CITY

The Netherlands' oldest city is buzzing with energy! In other words: Old City, Young Vibe. A vital city breathes, grows, is green, and provides space. Nijmegen has it all, as the Green Destinations Committee agrees. Following four Golden Awards, they have given us a Platinum Award in 2022! A global recognition for destination quality and destination management for sustainable tourism.

Ingrid Kerkvliet on Steenbreek, Herenboeren and Van Tuin Tot Bord:

‘GREEN IS NOT THE FINAL STEP, BUT OUR STARTING POINT’

When it comes to a healthy living environment in Nijmegen, one person you can't ignore is Ingrid Kerkvliet. She talks enthusiastically about greening, biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture and urban agriculture. She believes that although it is now five past midnight, it does not help to sit gloomily in a corner. "Together, we can definitely make a difference."

The network she built during the Green Capital year runs like a green thread through Ingrid Kerkvliet's career. The central themes for her are biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, and climate adaptation. With the Stadsbijen (City Bees) project, she placed the first hives on the roof of the Nijmegen Town Hall in 2013, before joining the Green Challenges during 2017. A year later, when Nijmegen became Green Capital, the Green Challenges project brought a different theme to the attention of Nijmegen residents every month. Kerkvliet became advocate for the biodiversity and food themes. In late 2017, she added yet another arrow to her bow: Operatie Steenbreek Nijmegen, a campaign to encourage residents to replace the tiles in their gardens with greenery. "I felt honoured and enthusiastic, but I wanted to create the campaign together with someone." She approached Yvonne Keijzers, with whom she had previously founded the women's network Future Builders. "She was also enthusiastic straight away."

Long-term

Kerkvliet explains that the Municipality had long wanted to join the national Stichting Steenbreek, especially with

the Green Capital year coming up. "Clearly, the European Commission also expects you to continue with sustainable activities after this kind of year. That is why this campaign, which would continue beyond 2018, was such a good fit." She personally also found the prospect of a longer project appealing. "You never build a campaign in one year. You need at least two years for building up and seeding, and only then can you actually start expanding or harvesting."

Tree Planting Day

NL Bloeit!, a later permanent partner of Operatie Steenbreek, was already organising a kind of XL version of the National Tree Planting Day for the Green Capital year. As many as 32 primary schools participated on 14 March 2018. "That was the perfect moment to launch Steenbreek, also because it was a week before the municipal elections. At such times, politicians are happy to show up and help out," Kerkvliet says, smiling. Some thirteen thousand tiles went out that day, to be replaced by six thousand trees and plants. "There was also a lovely atmosphere in all those schoolyards. And we got massive amounts of

publicity, including a long-read article in de Volkskrant. It was a successful start, and that was also how we proceeded: hitching onto other actions and seeking publicity. Sadly, Yvonne Keijzers passed away in October 2019 after a short illness. She has contributed greatly to the successful launch of Operatie Steenbreek."

New challenge

There followed a period of building brand awareness, networking and linking up with projects of the Municipality and housing associations. "After two-and-a-half years, this approach started paying off, and parties started approaching us. And residents knew better where to find us." Five years later, she looks back on a successful campaign that resulted in 100,000 tiles a year being collected. Last June, Kerkvliet made the switch to Natuur en Milieu Gelderland to work as project leader for agriculture, food, and healthy environment.

Herenboeren

She also puts in about eight hours a week as Chair of Herenboeren Nijmegen and Lingezen. Herenboeren stands for producing sustainable food together: local food, with a strong focus on biodiversity and healthy soil. The farm is supported by over two hundred households. These households are co-owners, they put in €2000 (€1000 for single-person households) and pay a fixed contribution for what is harvest-



• Ingrid Kerkvliet last spring as campaign leader for Operatie Steenbreek Nijmegen. Photo: David van Haren

ed from the land. The search for the first plot of land – the goal is to have three Herenboerderijen near Nijmegen – lasted all of two-and-a-half years. On 1 June, the first plants and seeds went into the ground at the first Herenboerderij, north of Nijmegen, in Park Lingezen. “Although it was a long search, I always thought: we are building something incredibly beautiful.” She enthusiastically talks about the dedication of the people on the board. “Not only in the search for land, but also in their belief that agriculture really has to change. With the farmers, members, and board of Herenboeren Lingezen, we show that it is possible to produce food without using pesticides and fertilisers. It’s lovely, every week, to see everyone come to pick up their share of the harvest. Together, we can definitely make a difference.”

Social aspect

Kerkvliet is also chair of Stichting Van Tuin Tot Bord (From Garden to Plate

Foundation). “With three neighbourhood kitchen gardens and three neighbourhood restaurants, this project also focuses on the social aspect, in addition to introducing people to healthy food, also people on a small budget. It’s about working in the garden together, cooking together, and eating together. This project brings together a lot of things that are incredibly important if you want to create a liveable, healthy city.”

Network

Both at Van Tuin Tot Bord and Herenboeren Nijmegen and Lingezen, Kerkvliet ran into some old acquaintances, all contacts she made or strengthened during the Green Capital year. “Personally, that year helped me considerably expand my network. Just like now with Herenboeren, basically. That always makes me really happy: working with a great team to build something I find really meaningful and that also contributes to my personal

development. I find that important as well.”

Kerkvliet believes that the title of Green Capital gives a city like Nijmegen a chance to reflect. “What are we doing and where do we want to go? Sometimes I fear that this kind of clear sight can also drop away again in the reality of everyday life. It’s a shame; you should really get a wake-up call every time. Precisely because the urgency is so enormous when it comes to the biodiversity crisis and the climate crisis. Although I don’t really want to use the word crisis; in my opinion it is a matter of policy failure. A crisis is something that just hits you, but we’ve seen this coming for 50 years.”

In conclusion, she has a wish for Nijmegen. “When it comes to climate adaptation, we really need to put much more effort into greening. Especially when you see what is being built in the city. Green should not be the final step, but our starting point. In everything we do.” •



• The first Kleurrijk Groen Course, with **Henk Moeniralam** on the far left. *Photo: Jeroen van Heijningen*

Henk Moeniralam and Jitske Broers from Kleurrijk Groen:

‘SUSTAINABILITY BELONGS TO EVERYONE’

“Kleurrijk Groen is very much alive. And it will keep going, because there is still a great need for a more diverse base of support for sustainability.” So says Jitske Broers, Programme Coordinator of Kleurrijk Groen (Colourful Green) at Bureau Wijland for the past 18 months. Together with former Chairman of the Kleurrijk Groen Network Henk Moeniralam, she looks back on the early years of Kleurrijk Groen, an initiative of Bureau Wijland, a consultancy and project agency committed to a sustainable and diverse society.

Kleurrijk Groen first saw the light of day in the year before the Green Capital year. Henk Moeniralam shares how Bureau Wijland Director Qader Shafiq attended a preparatory conference for the Green Capital year in 2017. “He saw a rather homogeneous audience and thought: this can’t be right, we need to broaden people’s involvement in the Green Capital.” So, later that year, he organised a meeting conference on a boat on the Waal.

Following this meeting, a network was created. Moeniralam, who had worked for 30 years as an environmental researcher at the Municipality of Nijmegen, started looking for suitable candidates within his own network. “Every first-line member of the network had to invite five people, and second-line members had to invite another three people. In this way, I brought in eight people from the Caribbean-Surinamese community.”

Course

Following the meeting conference, the first Kleurrijk Groen Course was created. In this course, ambassadors are trained to share knowledge about sustainability in their own communities. The second course took place last year, and a third course is due to start this autumn. “Kleurrijk Groen is very much alive. And it will keep going, because there is still a great need for a more diverse base of support for sustainability. Sustainability belongs to everyone,” says Programme Coordinator Jitske Broers.

The course consists of eight modules: strategic influence and influencing skills, waste prevention, sustainable mobility, energy and energy transition, inspiration and motivation, journalistic tips, economy and sustainability, and the world of bees. “The participants have to meet certain



• Meeting of Kleurrijk Groen Network at the Nijmegen Hortus, September 2022.

Henk Moeniralam stands in front of the group, with **Jitske Broers** sitting on the far left.

Photo: Kleurrijk Groen

requirements. They are offered the course for free, but they have to complete an assignment. The assignment is basically to turn green knowledge into green influence," says Moeniralam, who took part in the first course himself.

Eyes of the neighbourhood

"Each participant is asked to organise a sustainable initiative within their own group," says the former Chairman. "And to also shape this initiative themselves," Broers adds. "They may use their own input for that. They are the eyes of their neighbourhood and can identify what is needed. So that is the assignment, and the execution is up to the participant. That leads to a wide range of creative ideas." The number of participants in a course varies from 8 to 12. "The first course stirred up a lot of things," says Moeniralam. "When I was working at the Municipality of Nijmegen, I often used the environmental monitor to do research on the Nijmegen population's commitment to sustainability and concrete participation in sustainable initiatives. Invariably, it turned out that only a limited group participated: people with a high income and education. And they lived in certain neighbourhoods. Bureau Wijland and the Kleurrijk Groen Course ensured that broadening took place slowly. This can be shown with research."

Broers explains that participants receive a certificate at the end of a course. "We also always offer them an excursion, to

show our appreciation. In the first and second course, participants visited a bee farm, including an extensive tour and honey tasting. That was educational, but also fun and good for the team spirit. And you can learn a lot from bees, when it comes to the environment."

Yields

Since that first course, other projects have emerged under the Kleurrijk Groen banner, says Broers. She mentions festival Di-Vers, which held its fifth edition last September. This festival is all about meeting and connecting people, cultures, and nature. "We also had a Kleurrijk Koken (Colourful Cooking) project with cooking videos from all over the world. And we organised Groen Doen! (Green Action!) in collaboration with Bureau Lentekracht." This project, which is now completed, yielded nine green initiatives, ranging from green façades to insect hotels.

"And then there is the Wij-bos (We-woods), of course," adds Moeniralam. In the Wij-bos, participants planted both native and non-native trees, with each tree bearing a name or designation that refers to the country or area where various citizens come from. "People who took the course also joined in and planted a tree. They took their families with them, including their children, and those children in turn tell about it in school. This creates a great snowball effect." The Wij-bos is now full, but there are plans for a second plot.

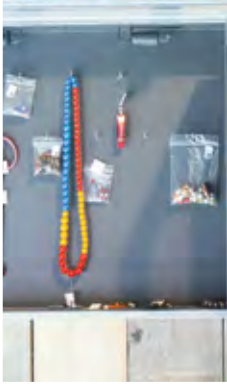
Regular group

"The people who took part in a course remain within our network," says Broers. "They form a group now, supplemented by people who did not take part in a course. This group of people helps and supports us in other projects. For example, at festival Di-Vers, they give workshops or offer performances. They also helped out at the international science film festival InScience and at democracy festival Grondfest, where we offered a programme in collaboration with members of the Kleurrijk Groen Network. These are all yields."

According to Moeniralam, Kleurrijk Groen is now a regular player in Nijmegen when it comes to sustainability. But the network has also grown beyond the municipal borders. "There is now also a Kleurrijk Groen Network Arnhem. That definitely grew out of the Nijmegen network," says the former Chairman. Can the network expand further still? "Yes, it can. We still have a long way to go. In particular, young people in certain groups could be encouraged even more. They are the world of the future, and that's where we need to focus now."

Sustainable 100

For three years in a row, Kleurrijk Groen scored really well in the Trouw Sustainable 100: 35th position in 2019, 20th position in 2020, and 14th position in 2021. The fact that it no longer appears on the list is due to Bureau Wijland's Director Qader Shafiq taking a seat on the jury himself. In doing so, the initiator of Kleurrijk Groen is setting a good example: how to turn green knowledge into green influence. And Programme Coordinator Broers is absolutely right: Kleurrijk Groen is very much alive! •

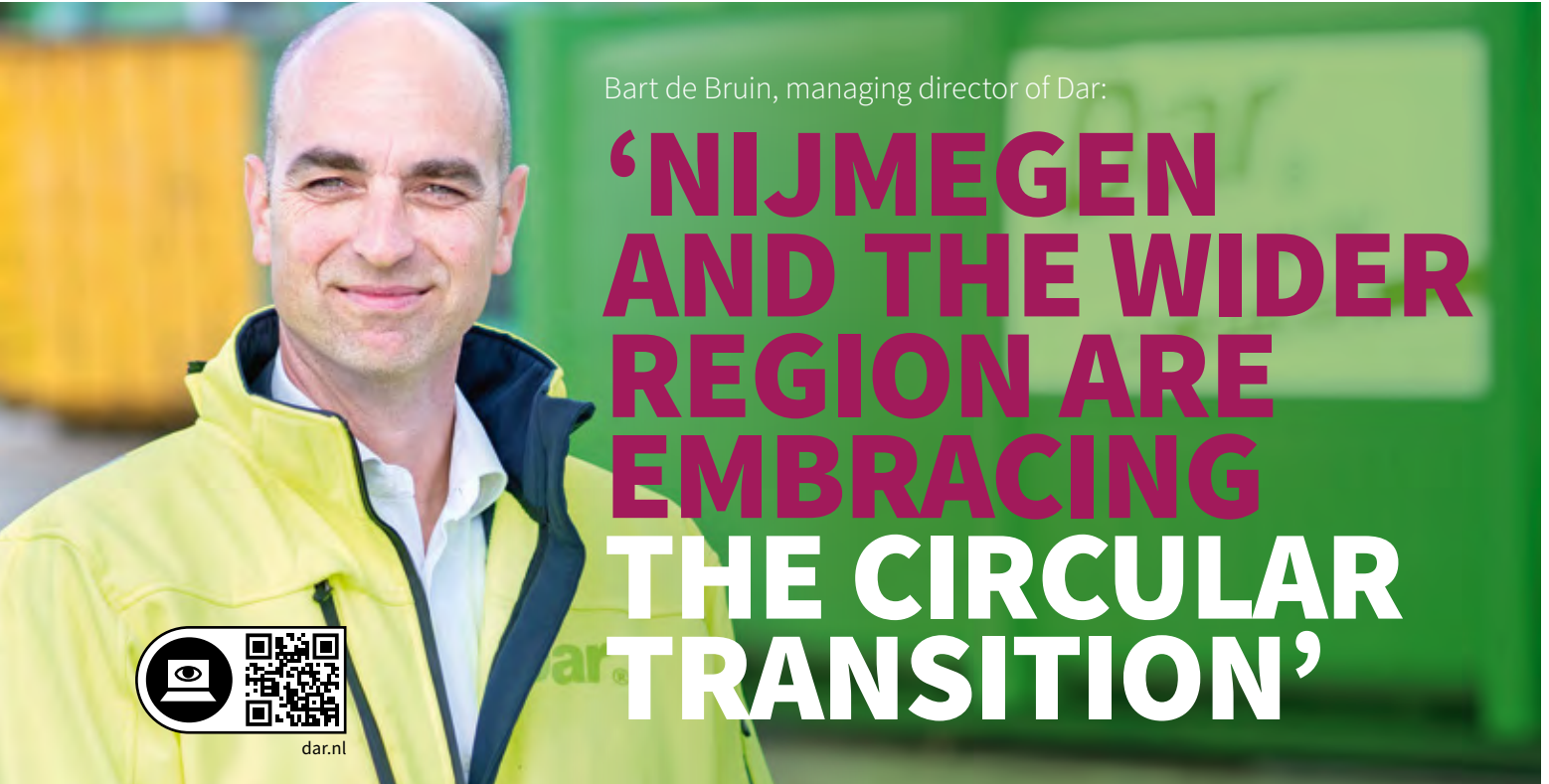




CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Since the Green Capital year, many activities and initiatives around the circular economy emerged in Nijmegen. In a circular economy, we try to reuse raw materials and components as much as possible. Since 2020, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and public authorities have joined forces in the Rijk van Nijmegen Circular Council, the main catalyst of the regional circular programme.





• Bart de Bruin, managing director of Dar. Photo: Dar

Dar is responsible for waste collection and public space management in the municipality of Nijmegen. Bart de Bruin has worked at Dar for more than a decade, and was appointed managing director in 2018. He also chairs the Rijk van Nijmegen Circular Council, a collective of entrepreneurs, and government and educational institutions looking to boost the circular economy in the region.

The Green Capital year helped put the transition to a circular economy on the agenda regionally. "Former alderwoman Harriët Tiemens was looking for ways to ensure that the Green Capital year had a lasting and growing impact. Her search revealed a strong base of support for taking up this challenge with the whole region and with all governmental and educational institutions, and entrepreneurs." This led to the creation of the Circular Council, with De Bruin as its chairman, in 2020. "With a core team with RvN@ and also two Nijmegen officials helping to speed up the pace on this dossier, so to speak. Nijmegen is

certainly taking its responsibility in continuing to encourage this process. That's great to see and also really necessary," says De Bruin. "That, I think, is our greatest legacy in the field of circularity, that we are really making progress towards the circular transition, partly thanks to the Circular Council and its network."

Legitimacy

De Bruin cites as an example the Lifeport Circular Festival, an annual Nijmegen event that brings together regional SMEs, and educational and government institutions to work

towards a more circular economy.

The last editions attracted over three hundred visitors from the region. "These are all people from the region who have some kind of connection with circularity," says De Bruin. "So there's energy there! And we're going to continue to build on that in the coming years."

Circular award

Another concrete result of the Circular Council is the Circle, an annual circular award issued since 2020. The award is intended for the organisation or entrepreneur who stands out most in the field of circularity through their positive impact on resource use. These are usually somewhat larger, established companies, De Bruin acknowledges. "But because we saw that startups were actually unable to compete, we created another award in 2022: the Startup Circle. We are at the start of the circular

transition, so it's good to specifically highlight these smaller companies with wonderful circular innovations, and help them to grow further."

Next phase

For the follow-up process, an application has been submitted to the Regio Deal Arnhem-Nijmegen, a partnership between the state and the region to tackle challenges in the region. De Bruin hopes to generate funding in this way, thus allowing the Circular Council to continue its work for several years. "The substantive projects will continue to run, but you also need process funding. Among other things, for a programme director and, in our case, the contribution to the RVN@ innovation platform, a kind of spider in the web that organises everything. We've been running for several years now with the help of all partners, including the provincial government. It is time for the next phase. I hope we succeed in partnering with the Regio Deal and are able to substantially increase the number of entrepreneurs, so that we can keep going for several more years."

Top performance

De Bruin was appointed managing director at Dar midway through the Green Capital year, prior to which he had worked there in other positions. "Nijmegen is our largest shareholder. If you can assist the city in gaining such a title, you should. And I think Dar is an important tool for Nijmegen to ensure that the city – and that really is our mission – has a circular, fresh, and green living environment. Nijmegen is our customer, and so are its 180 thousand inhabitants. Together, we deliver a top performance every day, and that is what makes it so pleasant to live in Nijmegen."

Dar's contribution

He says he has to think about it for a moment, but then quickly lists a

'The alternative **chain of office** for the Mayor is a great practical example of legacy'

number of examples of Dar's contribution to the Green Capital year. "We were involved in all kinds of events. In addition, the recycling centre was included in the green routes that ran past all kinds of sustainable initiatives in the city that year. And together with the Wecycle foundation and grid operator Alliander, we facilitated the creation of an alternative chain of office for the Mayor." The circular chain of office is made of scrap copper and precious metals recovered from electronics waste. "This is a wonderful example of legacy. I do think we still need to do something with it. Fortunately, it will soon get a very nice visible spot at the City Hall. But I would also love it if we could perhaps link the chain to the circular award."

Following the line

According to De Bruin, the Green Capital year did not directly lead to behavioural change among Nijmegen citizens. "These are long-term processes. And I think parties like Dar should create the frameworks for them. Some developments are not a direct effect of the Green Capital year, but they do fit in that line. Nijmegen and the wider region are embracing circularity primarily by taking concrete steps. Less talking, more doing. The city was rewarded for this in 2018, and we will simply continue to follow this line." For instance, the municipality of Nijmegen gave Dar permission to set up Road2Work@Dar, a separate company for electronics waste. "They now sort five to six million kilos of electronics waste that we prepare for recycling,

repair, and product reuse. In addition, the creation of a nappy recycling plant at ARN has enabled us to start separate collection of nappies. And then there is our vehicle fleet, which we are in the process of making more sustainable. These are all new developments befitting a Green Capital."

Transition

Circularity is moving up the agenda at Dar, says De Bruin. "Even in a sector like housing, regional steps are now being taken towards circular housing construction. With Via-T, the region is creating a local centre for craftsmanship, innovation and sustainability. An environment based on cooperation between all parties from government, education and the corporate sector, just as in the Circular Council. That is the only way for us to solve the complex challenges we're facing, and actually take steps."

"This transition is incredibly interesting and complex at the same time. Because circular does not always mean immediately financially viable. In many cases, virgin material is still cheaper than recycled material. Ultimately, it should not be about selling as much as possible, but about preserving the value of the products we all make and consume as long as possible. This requires a lot of innovativeness, entrepreneurship, and, above all, a different way of working together in the different product chains. I'm convinced that these new forms of collaboration will soon become available to really get the circular transition going." •

Puck Bakker, entrepreneur in sustainable fashion brands:

‘I WOULDN’T CHANGE IT FOR THE WORLD NOW’



re-tale.nl

If you're interested in sustainable shopping, Nijmegen offers all kinds of shops, especially second-hand or vintage shops. But sustainability goes so much further, says young Nijmegen entrepreneur Puck Bakker. In the autumn of 2022, she opened Re-tale, a colourful clothing shop in the centre of Nijmegen. "Sustainability is a very broad term; I personally prefer the term conscious."

Puck Bakker studied fashion management, and then went to work at the purchasing department of a fast fashion brand. Her job was to maintain contacts with suppliers abroad. "I really enjoyed the work, but the pressure on suppliers was growing. At some point I thought: Do I want to keep going with this? Is it still something I can stand for?" The idea of having her own shop was very appealing. A Nijmegen fashion entrepreneur she sought advice from said: Go work in a shop for a while first, then you'll know what it's really like.

That shop

So she went to work at Make My Day, a successful Nijmegen concept store. "I had such an amazing time there that I thought: I don't need a shop of my own anymore. But after three years, in 2021, I felt the itch once again. In the meantime, I'd learned a lot about sustainability and conscious entrepreneurship. If I was going to start my own shop, I wanted to feel good about it." The pandemic

also played a role in her thinking. "I looked at the people working in health-care who were really doing important work, and I thought: What contribution do I make? Fashion can be very beautiful, but at its core, of course, it's also fairly superficial. You can be incredibly good at what you do and make a lot of money doing it, but will you really feel good about it inside? Even if you don't know what's behind it?" Bakker decided to take a different approach, and started an online shop selling handmade items from India.

Living wage

Since last year, she has also been selling these products in a physical shop (see box). She works with three regular Indian partners who guarantee a safe, inclusive working environment and pay their workers a living wage. "A living wage is based on the average costs of an average person, and that is almost double the minimum wage. Also, the workshops I work with do not pay their employees per piece, but based on a fixed salary. This provides financial security for the people there, who are very important to me."

Powerful women

One of her three regular partners is a non-profit organisation that works only with women in rural areas in India. It uses all profits to finance wages, but also childcare and education projects. "Those women are now the primary breadwinners of their families. If they

• Puck Bakker in her shop. Photo: Studio Elo

‘I see my shop as an option for **better,** more conscious consumption’

have daughters, they will grow up differently because they see that there are real opportunities for them. They truly believe that when a woman feels powerful and good, she inspires her entire family.” The young Nijmegen entrepreneur says this way of working gives her enormous satisfaction. “On this end, people buy a blouse they’re happy with. And at the same time, someone at the other end also benefits. That is really the best feeling there is. I think five years ago I would never have expected that I could use clothing to contribute in a small way to a better world. I wouldn’t change it for the world now.”

Conscious

Bakker acknowledges that she had to make choices. “Sustainability is a very broad term; I personally prefer the term conscious. Sustainability means something different to everyone, and it’s often used in a rather meaningless way. It’s also very personal: I, for one, really care about the people aspect, which is why we focus more on the working conditions of the people who make the clothes. But we also work a lot with recycled materials and we use raw materials as sparingly as possible. So that’s where the environmental aspect comes in.” Bakker decided to focus on three of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: equality, conscious consumption and production, and partnership for the goals. Conscious consumption and production? “I see my shop as an option for better, more conscious consumption. I want to help people in the shop honestly, and I’d rather they leave feeling good than with the feeling that I foisted something on them. Look, if

nobody buys anything, my shop won’t last long. But someone who has a positive experience is more likely to come back. I will have planted a seed.” Another example of conscious production are the two Spanish brands she sells in her shop alongside the Indian brands. “They produce on a very small scale. They wait for orders from shops and only make what’s been ordered. If I want to reorder, they have to make more. They then collect orders again, so they don’t waste material or labour. That way, every brand I sell is linked to one of the three sustainability goals.”

Nijmegen?!

When Bakker first opened her shop in Nijmegen last year, she sometimes got surprised reactions. Wouldn’t her idea fit better in a city like Amsterdam or Utrecht? “Actually, the shop is a perfect fit for Nijmegen. Lots of people here, including students, are really conscious about the choices they make. Besides, I come from here myself and I missed having this kind of shop in Nijmegen.” Opening her shop last year was really exciting. “I thought people would not appreciate it, that it was too loud, too colourful, and that people would be quick to dismiss sustainability as ‘hippie-like’. Also, my prices are slightly higher than average. But most clients turn out to be pleasantly surprised, and they usually leave the shop with a bit more knowledge about sustainability. You know, it’s not as if I’m changing the world with what I do, but at least I try to do it better than an average fast fashion company. I think Nijmegen is actually really ready for that.” •

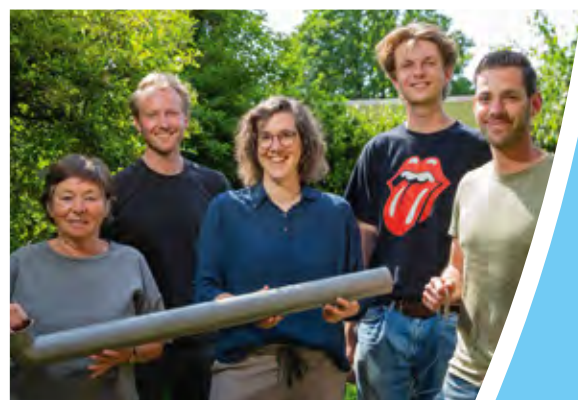


WIN YOUR SHOP

In March 2022, Puck Bakker won the Win Your Shop competition, one of Hartje Nijmegen’s many promotional activities. Since 2020, Hartje Nijmegen has worked to make the city centre more attractive, cleaner, greener, and economically stronger. To this end, the city of Nijmegen is drawing up an action plan together with residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs. Win Your Shop is one of the projects that falls under this action plan.


A professional jury and the public chose Bakker’s plan from among 88 entries in March 2022. She won a shop of her own in the Nijmegen city centre, and later that year settled in premises on Stikke Hezelstraat. The Municipality of Nijmegen paid the first six months’ rent and invested €15,000 in Bakker’s shop. In the following six months, Bakker took over the rent step by step. She now pays the entire rent herself.





CLIMATE ADAPTATION

The Spiegelwaal is a great example of how a city can adapt to the climate by giving space to water. In addition, greening the city and disconnecting rain pipes is important to combat heat and flooding. Thanks to Operatie Steenbreek, in the last five years, over half a million garden stones were replaced with greenery, and nearly 250 rain pipes were disconnected in Nijmegen.



Cabaret duo Piepschuim on their climate performance:

‘FEELING WHAT THE PROBLEM IS’

Cabaret duo Piepschuim is no stranger to Nijmegen. Cor Burger and Robbert Koekoek both studied in the City on the Waal, and perform there regularly. In 2018, the musical duo closed the Green Capital year with a performance during the final edition of Sustainability Café. They recently came to Nijmegen with their latest show *Buiten de Lijntjes (Outside the Lines)* about the effects of climate change. “Art cannot stand aside.”

Theatre programme booklets describe *Buiten de Lijntjes* as follows: ‘A heavy message wrapped in the lightest material imaginable: Styrofoam’ (‘Piepschuim’ is the Dutch word for styrofoam). Indeed, a cabaret show about climate change seems to be a contradiction in terms. How do you manage the audiences’ expectations? “It’s hard to strike the right chord in this context,” acknowledges Robbert Koekoek, the duo’s multi-instrumentalist. “You don’t want to put people off,” says lyricist and songwriter Cor Burger. “You don’t want them to wonder whether there will be jokes about famine! But I think we’ve found the

right form.” According to Burger, a show on climate change is also pure necessity: “As artists, we cannot remain behind, and pretend that this crisis does not exist. Art cannot stand aside, and it has a duty in this context. The story has to be told in a different way, because science is not getting it right. After all, those figures have been around for a long time, and we’re still not doing anything. So there’s got to be a better way to tell the story.”

Different perspective

“Theatre is really a different medium,” Koekoek explains. “We now also often perform this show at conferences. By

speaking from a different discipline, we actually succeed in moving people who work on the climate professionally. They get to hear the same story, but from a completely different perspective.” Burger adds: “They take a rational approach. They know the figures and the charts. The thing is, though, figures don’t hit you full in the heart, where you are vulnerable. And that is exactly what we do. We make people feel what the problem is.”

Gut-wrenching

Buiten de Lijntjes starts with a laugh, as audiences have come to expect from Piepschuim. But this is then followed by a hard rap on the fingers in the ensuing song, entitled *De toekomst is niet meer wat-ie is geweest* (*The future is not what it used to be*). And the second song *Als (If)* – “Which I personally find even more intense,” says Burger – is also pretty gut-wrenching.



• In their show, *Buiten de Lijntjes*, **Cor Burger** (l) and **Robbert Koekoek** use clothes and scenery from other cabaret artists. Photo: Bert Beelen

‘In this **performance**, we are more Catholic than the Pope’

climate scientist Heleen de Coninck, who co-authored the UN Climate Panel IPCC report. “Everything we say in the show is true,” Burger says. The duo noticed that this claim also made the audience more critical after the show. Are they privately also so worried about the climate, or is it all theatre? Do they eat meat, do they fly, how did they come to the theatre? “We are real fundamentalists,” says Burger, laughing. “But that was already the case before this show,” Koekoek responds. “But because we want to anticipate these kinds of questions and avoid entering into discussions, in this performance, we are more Catholic than the Pope.”

CO2-neutral

Buiten de Lijntjes may even be the first CO2-neutral performance. For instance, the duo now drives an electric bus to theatres. “So we’ve already used up our holiday money for the next few years,” Koekoek says, laughing, only to add in earnest: “That really is a choice.” They also perform in reused scenery and second-hand clothes from other comedians. And yet few people believe that their clothes really come from Pieter Derks and Theo Maassen, and the old set from Lebbis. Koekoek finds this very strange. “It is so in line with this show!”

Nijmegen

Piepschuim is touring with the show, now in its second season, all over the country. They have brought it to Nijmegen three times: as a duo in de Lindenberg, and at LUX and De Vereeniging with Nijmegen journalist and programme maker Sinan Can as narrator and a string quartet led by Egon Kracht. Both performances came about thanks to a special subsidy from

the Municipality of Nijmegen during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep the cultural sector afloat. Koekoek: “Performing with a big line-up was something we’d wanted for some time. Now we were able to make it happen, and the result was a kind of spin-off from our regular theatre show, but around the same theme.”

The two know Nijmegen well. They both studied there and Koekoek still lives there. “Nijmegen is a progressive city with a highly educated population, which generally means we get to play for an interested and well-informed audience.” Burger: “You really do notice that the climate bubble we are in has a big overlap with Nijmegen. It feels a bit like you can reach people here more easily because they already partly know the facts.”

Hopeful future

Piepschuim also plays an adapted version of the show in secondary schools. “In a city like Nijmegen, children can usually see that there is an urgent problem,” says Burger. Koekoek adds: “They realise what they stand to lose as well as what there is to gain. I feel that children who live in more rural areas mainly see what they stand to lose. I found this a very grim observation. Because we also want to offer people some perspective in the performance. Not the solution, but certainly a hopeful future. And I missed that there.”

Does that mean there will be a sequel to *Buiten de Lijntjes*? “We’re still playing this show for the rest of the season, but I’m already writing stuff,” Burger says. “Around the same theme. I don’t expect the climate crisis to be resolved by the time we finish our tour. It feels like a joke and in a way it is.” •

“We start off quite nasty,” he acknowledges, “you really see people flinch. Then I say: ‘We know you need hope. You will get it, we promise... But not yet.’ In the end, of course, we have to offer the audience something more than just misery. There has to be some form of humour somewhere. People open up once they’ve had a good laugh. It has to be funny and urgent, AND you have to give people hope.” With an important message: talk about the climate, about what you can do yourself.

Thorough research

The show took shape during the pandemic, when theatres had to close for longer periods of time. This gave Burger and Koekoek plenty of time for some thorough research. They read hundreds of books and took online courses on the climate. They also collaborated with people like Margot Ribberink (see pp. 30 and 31) and

Margot Ribberink, from weatherwoman to nature advocate:

‘GREEN CHALLENGES WAS A FORERUNNER OF CITIZENS’ INITIATIVES’

Margot Ribberink has witnessed big changes in recent years. “Things are bubbling up from below, and that really began in 2018.” She believes that Nijmegen’s 2018 Green Challenges was a forerunner of the countless citizens’ initiatives now popping up left and right. “People are worried, not only about the climate, but definitely also about nature.” She shares these concerns and wants to increase her own impact as well as that of citizens’ initiatives.

Margot Ribberink is a biologist by training, but she is best known as a weatherwoman. And in Nijmegen especially, also for her monumental farmhouse, which was moved in its entirety in 2012 to allow for the construction of a new city bridge. That bridge, De Oversteek, spans not only the Waal, but also the Spiegelwaal, the side channel that is such a successful example of how a city can adapt to the climate by giving space to water.

Energy

Water also played an important role in Ribberink’s contribution to the Green Capital year. “In the run-up to the Green Capital year, the city was buzzing with energy, around all kinds of topics: mobility, consumption, fashion, biodiversity, waste, and also water. It was a very creative period. There were brainstorming sessions, and more and more Nijmegen residents joined in.” This gave rise to 12 monthly themes, each with their own challenges, which Nijmegen residents were invited to take part in. Ribberink became the advocate for the water theme. “Water is of course

an incredibly broad theme. From extreme rainfall and how the city adapts to it, to our river, and high and low water. Then there is the issue of health and water. Together with volunteers, I developed several actions to bring this theme to the attention of Nijmegen residents. For a whole year, I was out every night, every day. Also on week-ends. This took a lot of energy, but it also brought me a lot. And it led to some wonderful actions.”

Seeds

“With these challenges, we wanted to give Nijmegen residents a taste of all themes, in all their diversity. We were planting seeds, the effect of which is still visible today.” As an example, she mentions Operatie Steenbreek, a successful greening campaign that was launched as action in one of the challenges. Ribberink is an ambassador for both the national Stichting Steenbreek and the local Nijmegen campaign. “Nijmegen has become a model campaign nationwide,” she says proudly. Besides her role as advocate for one of the Green Challenges, Ribberink also

joined the Programme Council in 2018. “The Council focused not so much on residents, but mostly on promoting the programme to the outside world.” These external visibility efforts were successful, as is apparent from a BBC article on Nijmegen as a sustainable capital published earlier this year (see QR code on p. 39). “I took a walk around the city with the BBC journalist and we had frequent telephone and email contact afterwards.” In the article, Ribberink says, among other things, that Nijmegen is achieving great successes in sustainability, and is a great example for the rest of the world.

Changes

But the world has changed since 2018, says Ribberink. “Take Stichting Steenbreek, for example. In the first few years, it was a networking organisation that mainly shared knowledge and inspiration. Now the time has come to look at problems that arise in implementation, particularly among municipalities. How can we help them in their ambition to emerge as climate-adaptive and climate-robust municipalities by 2030? Surely that is a different question from the ones we were asking a few years ago.”

Ribberink sees changes not only out there, but also within herself. “In recent years, I’ve been much more worried about nature than about the climate.



• **Margot Ribberink** in her role as ambassador for Operatie Steenbreek Nijmegen. Photo: William Moore

‘Nijmegen is an **example** for the rest of the world’

I feel that the idea of climate change has landed with people now, and that they are aware of the situation.” Which is not to say that she does not worry about it. “As a weatherwoman, I am of course thrown off guard by the fact that climate change is happening much faster than we expected. But we really need to make huge efforts to combat loss of biodiversity in the Netherlands. And where the theme of climate adaptation clashes with nature protection, we need to ensure that both are given sufficient attention. And not that one loses out.”

Chaos

She also sees changes in the rapid rise of citizens’ initiatives. “Things are bubbling up from below. Actually, this started in Nijmegen back in 2018, when pioneers raised the Green Challenges.

Now you see new citizens’ initiatives popping up across the Netherlands on a weekly basis. The reason is that people are worried. Not only about the climate, but definitely also about nature.” Ribberink feels and sees chaos all around her. She acknowledges that this chaos is also part of a transition. “We are in the thick of it, and I find it extremely interesting. Ultimately, a whole new society must somehow emerge out of this chaos.” In part to increase her own impact, she joined the board of the recently established Stichting Advocaat van de Aarde (Advocate for the Earth Foundation). “We want to bring together citizens’ initiatives, share knowledge, and help them go to court if the government does not follow the rules. I don’t actually want to take anyone to court; I just want to keep talking. But

there is no other way and nature has no voice. It needs an advocate. Citizen initiatives like Urgenda and MOB have shown that courts can play an important role in keeping climate and biodiversity targets on track.”

Nijmegen network

In this transition, Ribberink has faith in the existing Nijmegen network. “We have incredible knowledge and good people. This has already led to lots of great initiatives, both professional and citizens’ initiatives. Especially at Radboud University, where we have some really good researchers: Heleen de Coninck, who is co-authoring the UN climate panel IPCC report, Madeleen Helmer, who is working on heat stress, and Hans de Kroon, with his knowledge of biodiversity. But also Johan Vollenbroek, who is fully committed to stricter nitrogen policies with his MOB initiative. These are all Nijmegen people with incredible energy who actually make a difference.” •





MOBILITY

The kilometre-long express cycle paths encourage bicycle use around Nijmegen. Many people, approximately 65%, come to the city by bicycle. Buses have been running on biogas for years. Nijmegen is home to several providers of shared bicycles, shared cars, and shared scooters.

The city brings electric shared vehicles and charging infrastructure together in eHubs. As a city on the river Waal, Nijmegen is committed to sustainable inland navigation.



Birgit Hendriks, urban logistics expert and chair of the circular hub:

‘WE NEED TO REALLY INCREASE OUR IMPACT’

In the year that Nijmegen was Green Capital, Birgit Hendriks celebrated the tenth anniversary of ‘her’ company, Binnenstadservice Nijmegen. She can rightly call herself a pioneer in urban logistics, and it is therefore no coincidence that she was asked to act as ambassador for the mobility theme in 2018. But she ended up doing so much more.

From a construction trailer on the site of the former Centrale Gelderland, Engie’s power plant, Birgit Hendriks talks about the run-up to, implementation of and impact of Nijmegen’s Green Capital year. The construction trailer is part of a circular hub chaired by Hendriks. Along with 12 shipping containers, the trailer is meant to offer temporary housing. On the wall hangs the design of a sustainable, wooden shed. “That is what we are supposed to build here,” says Hendriks, “but we are waiting for the zoning plan to come through.”

Challenging start

Hendriks has been active in the field of sustainable urban logistics since 2008. In that year, together with her business partner Max Prudon, she launched Binnenstadservice Nijmegen, which focuses on sustainable provisioning of businesses in the city centre. The company provides fossil-free and emission-free freight transport. “In two years’ time, we grew to supplying 160 shops from a distribution centre on the outskirts of the city. Physically, it was easy enough, but due to the economic

crisis of the time, suppliers failed to catch on as we were hoping they would. Financially, it was a complete drama.”

Restart

Out of 160 shops, 115 ended up making a loss as a result. “We went to talk to those entrepreneurs and explained that we could not continue to do our work for a tenner a month if no paying suppliers joined us. We had to say goodbye to many customers and restart from scratch.” What it meant is that the delivery address went back to the shop address. “And you can see the effect clearly in the traffic on shopping streets. But as long as there are no restrictions – a ban on trucks or a zero-emission zone – there is no motivation for suppliers to start organising their



• **Birgit Hendriks** with the Green Challenges cargo bike during the 2018 zero-emission distribution demonstration. *Photo: Green Challenges*

Houtstraat, from a mini hub on Kelfkensbos. I had hoped that the Green Capital initiative would accelerate the imposition of restrictions on fossil truck traffic." Over the past years, Hendriks has seen one urban distribution initiative after another fail. "I always said: that's not going to happen to us. I really invested a fortune in this foundation." This year, Binnenstadservice Nijmegen is celebrating its 15th anniversary. "The fact that we can celebrate our fifteenth anniversary is really thanks to a group of fantastic, loyal customers and staff. This time, we did not celebrate with a big conference, but with a small City Logistics Café about the zero-emission logistics zone that is due to be launched in 2025. We hope that from there, we can grow once again and increase our impact."

Freight hubs

"I am still responsible for Binnenstadservice Nijmegen," says Hendriks. As of this writing, the company supplies 26 local customers and works for the clients of Goederenhubs Nederland. "These are the national parties that now really see that delivery via hubs is more sustainable." Hendriks herself is the founder and director of Goederenhubs Nederland. "But that is irrelevant in the context of this interview; we should focus on Nijmegen. Which I clearly didn't always do." The reason being that Hendriks enjoys going out and sharing her knowledge and experience in urban logistics, including the rookie mistakes made in Nijmegen, with other cities. In the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. In the process, she hopes that joining urban logistics forces in the Netherlands and in Europe will also benefit Nijmegen.

Drive for sustainability

Looking back at 2018, she concludes: "Green Capital cost me an awful lot of

time and energy, really an insane amount. But it was something I wanted to do, out of an incredible drive for sustainability." Hendriks was involved in all three attempts to secure the Green Capital title for Nijmegen, in 2014 in Copenhagen, a year later in Bristol, and finally, she and others organised the 2016 'supporters' trip' to Ljubljana. "I did all sorts of things: I stood with the Green Challenges cargo bike at many events, I chaired the Stichting Duurzaamheidscafé (Sustainability Café Foundation) and the Stichting Duurzame Estafette (Sustainable Relay Foundation), later renamed the Green Capital Challenges Foundation." Both foundations have since merged into the Stichting Duurzaam aan de Waal (Sustainable on the Waal Foundation). So what did all these efforts bring her personally? "First of all, the pleasure of winning the Green Capital title. I thought it was a fantastic year, but I think we could have achieved more, by holding on to the energy beyond 2018. Perhaps I was wrong to expect too much. I was personally working a lot in Europe at the time, I was rarely in Nijmegen. So I have to take some responsibility for that." Hendriks admits that she is a bit ambivalent about the impact of the Green Capital year. "It was a great year, but all of us, entrepreneurs, residents and the Nijmegen Municipality, did not really maximise that energy to do things structurally differently. We could have had much more impact if we had done so." For example, she would have liked mobility to be given the same long-term follow-up as Operatie Steenbreek (see page 16). "We can recapture that by joining forces to move towards zero-emission logistics zones in 2025: bundling to ensure fewer goods vehicles in Nijmegen and zero emissions!" •

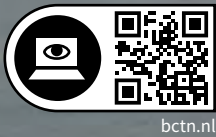
logistics chain differently, via Binnenstadservice," says Hendriks.

Last mile

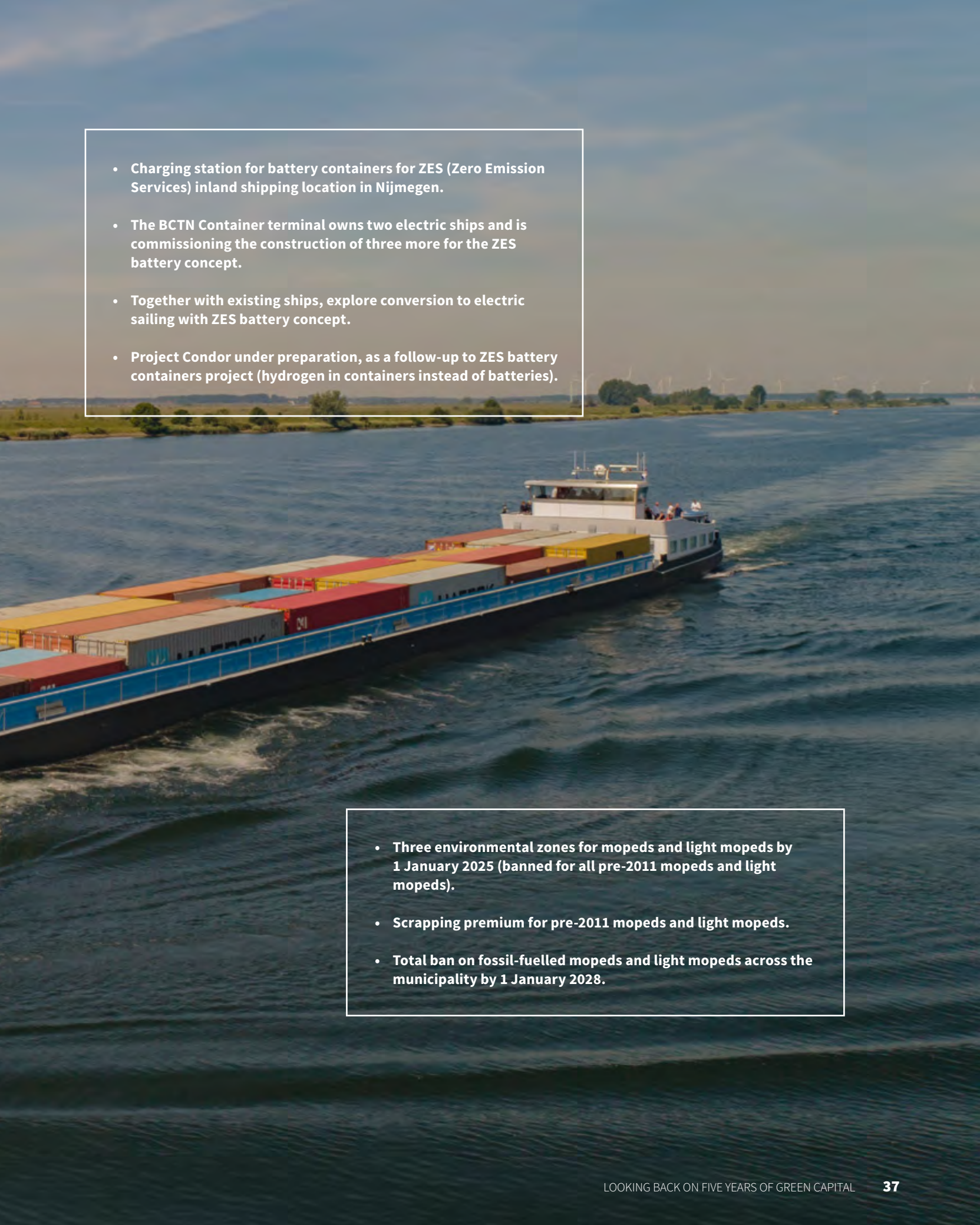
"The independent speciality shops are the biggest contributors to transport movements, because they have lots of different suppliers and no control over how the goods they order get to them. What you actually want is to give them back that control, so they can have a grip on that last mile. Because it's clearly not in their interest to have to wait for 15 drivers to walk in with one box each time. That only keeps them away from their customers. And the street is full of trucks and vans. With volume for that street that could easily fit in one van." But according to Hendriks it is precisely these independent specialty shops that do not have the purchasing power to organise logistics differently; this kind of initiative must come from suppliers. And suppliers only change the way they do things when they have to. "During the Green Capital year, we demonstrated zero-emission distribution for a week in the Hezelstraten and on

SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS AND MOBILITY

Photograph: BTCN Nijmegen Max electric sailing container ship (Photography: BTCN).



- Three zero-emission urban logistics (vans and trucks) zones by 1 January 2025.
- Sustainably Accessible Heijendaal Campus: joint procurement by campus partners and delivery via logistics hub.
- Development of hydrogen refuelling station for road transport by Fountain Fuel on Engie site.

- 
- **Charging station for battery containers for ZES (Zero Emission Services) inland shipping location in Nijmegen.**
 - **The BCTN Container terminal owns two electric ships and is commissioning the construction of three more for the ZES battery concept.**
 - **Together with existing ships, explore conversion to electric sailing with ZES battery concept.**
 - **Project Condor under preparation, as a follow-up to ZES battery containers project (hydrogen in containers instead of batteries).**

- **Three environmental zones for mopeds and light mopeds by 1 January 2025 (banned for all pre-2011 mopeds and light mopeds).**
- **Scrapping premium for pre-2011 mopeds and light mopeds.**
- **Total ban on fossil-fuelled mopeds and light mopeds across the municipality by 1 January 2028.**

Awareness and support

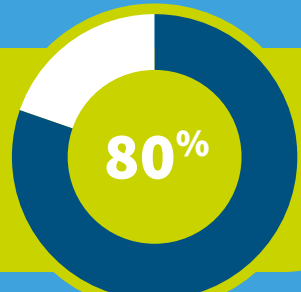
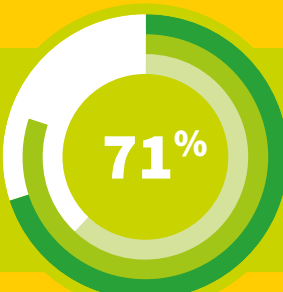
Source: Nijmegen European Green Capital, 4 jaar later. Stadspanel over duurzame veranderingen en European Green Capital (Nijmegen European Green Capital, four years later. City panel on sustainable changes and European Green Capital)



ENERGY TRANSITION



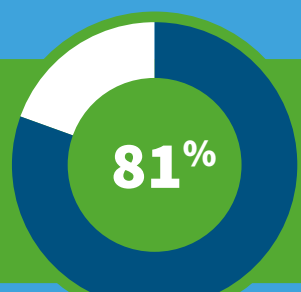
- NATURAL GAS-FREE
- INSULATION
- LOCAL GENERATION



VITAL CITY



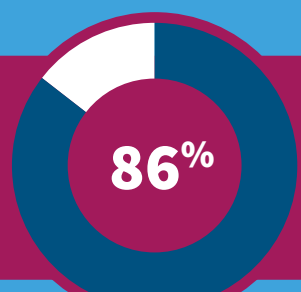
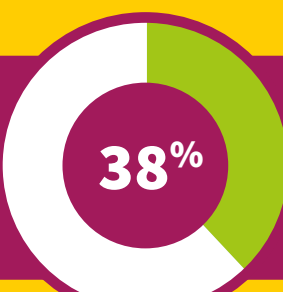
FOOD, HEALTHY AND GEEN



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



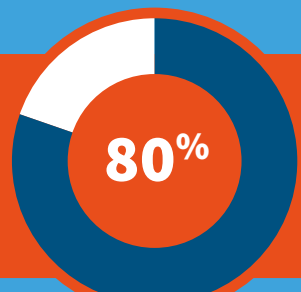
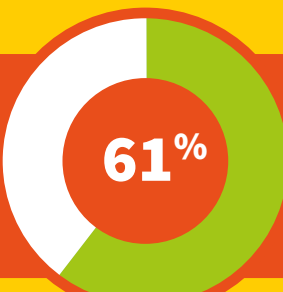
REUSE OF RAW MATERIALS AND COMPONENTS



MOBILITY



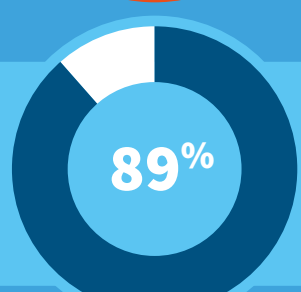
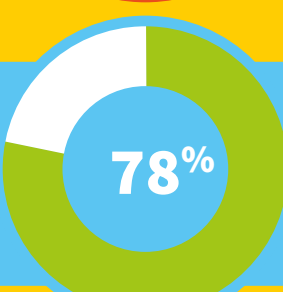
CLEAN AIR



CLIMAT ADAPTATION



CLIMATE TRANSITION



Awareness of Nijmegen European Green Capital 2018

2022



85%

2019

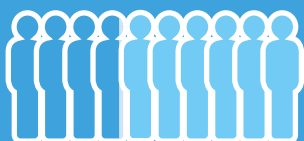
IMMEDIATELY AFTER EGC18



86%

2017

JUST BEFORE EGC18



38%

Attitude and behaviour

**PROUD
TO BE CHOSEN**



45%

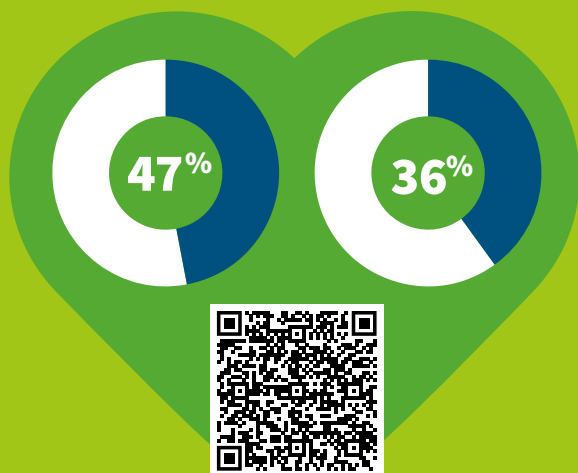
**INSPIRED TO 'ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY BEHAVIOUR'**



31%

Effects of EGC18

**STRENGTHENED
IMAGE OF NIJMEGEN
AS SUSTAINABLE CITY**



**INFLUENCE ON DECISIONS
AND BEHAVIOUR
OF MUNICIPALITY**



BBC article about Nijmegen.

COLOPHON

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**Climate
adaptation
programme**

**Engie-
site**

From coal plant to
sustainable energy hub

De Bastei

**Power2
Nijmegen**

**Energy and
heat transition**

eHubs

ROC

ARN

Electricity from waste and
biogas from organic waste

**Eco-
Schools**

HAN

**Campus
Heijendaal**

**Kop van
Malden**
Urban Farm

Warmoos
Historical nursery

**Green
Offices**
RU, HAN AND ROC

**Radboud
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**Sustainable
and circular
construction**

**Cycling
city**

**Sustainable
procurement**

**And
much more!**

nijmegen