

MINUTES

of the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

at Drogenbos (FelixArt)

on 26th. April 2024

Agenda of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

1. Approval of the draft minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting (PM)
1. Committee members' report
2. Treasurer's report and accounts as on December 31st, 2023
3. Auditor's report
4. Election of the Chairman, Committee members and the officers until the next AGM
5. Appointment of the auditor until the next AGM
6. Approval of the annual subscriptions for members and associate members
7. Approval of the Committee's recommendations for the donation of association funds to the National Trust in Britain
8. Any other business.

Jan Grauls, Chairman

Leo Nollet, Secretary

1. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM in 2023

The minutes of the previous AGM (mailed to the membership and posted on the NTAB website) were approved by written procedure.

The 2024 AGM took note of the approval by written procedure.

2. Committee members' report (presented by Jan Grauls, Chairman)

This report covered the period as of January 1st, 2023, up to December 31st, 2023.

All our activities took place in an enthusiastic spirit and were well attended, an indication of NTAB's good health. As agreed in the Committee, some activities were organized on Fridays, others on Saturdays, and we privileged outdoor events during the spring and summer

seasons. We also made sure that during all these excursions participants had the opportunity to interact amongst each other.

As in 2022, we were able to offer to our membership the **traditional programme** of 10 monthly outings and one UK trip (see below: the names mentioned after each activity are those of our members who volunteered to organize them)

In February, we visited the Institute of Tropical Medicine and the newly reopened Royal Fine Arts Museum in Antwerp, two fascinating discoveries for many participants (Margaret and Filip). In March, we discovered the charms of the city of Spa, the 'cradle of balneology' and a UNESCO World Heritage site (André). In April, the 19th century notary house, 'Huis Naegels', at Sint-Truiden opened its doors to us and the spring season was also the ideal moment to visit the wine estate 'Gloire de Duras' in Southern Limburg (Peter and Emile). In May, we went southwards and visited the impressive 17th century chateau de Modave and the picturesque Vieux Huy (Emile). In June, we went offshore – a first in NTAB's history! - and had a boat cruise to the wind farms on the Thornton Bank, 30 km from the coastline in front of Ostend (André). During the first week of September, a group of 30 NTAB members crossed the Channel and, under a blue sky, crisscrossed Devon and Somerset, an exceptionally agreeable and fascinating week (Johan, with help from André, Jan, Filip, and Tim). The proud city of Ghent welcomed us in October, where we visited the Patershol (Monks' Hole), the Prinsenhof (Prince's Court) and the stately mansion d'Haene Steenhuyse (Leo). In November, we visited the pleasant little town of Lier (Heather and Nick). We concluded our programme in December with a memorable visit to the Royal Library, where we were shown exquisite treasures from the library of the Dukes of Burgundy, and with our end-of-year reception at the Great Oath and of Saint Georges of the Crossbowmen, where we were welcomed by the 'doyen chef' in a way never to forget (André and Jan).

As we did in previous years, we stayed in touch with our membership through regular **Newsletters**. This allowed the Committee to keep the membership abreast of the planned activities and to remind them of upcoming events. Our **website** (*homepage*) is being visited frequently, as is its **blog** section, where our members can post their impressions and pictures after our outings. Our **Facebook** page seems to be a useful way to attract new members.

The **Committee** has met four times. A new NTAB member, Annick Dobbeleer, joined the Committee and expressed her willingness to contribute to the organization of our excursions and outings. Ineke Crijns kindly accepted to become our Treasurer and Margaret volunteered to become Membership Officer, thus relieving Leo of these responsibilities. Leo will remain our Secretary (see also below under Selection of Committee Members and Officers)

On behalf of the Committee and all our members, the Chair expressed special thanks to several of our friends:

He thanked Johan Vanbrabant, our webmaster, blog editor and coordinator of our UK trips: Johan displayed exceptional skills as organizer of our trip to Devon and Somerset, and as busy 'housekeeper' of our website and blog.

The Chair also extended a special word of thanks to our programme coordinator André Ceulemans and to all those who volunteered to organize our outings: they too deserve a word of warm thanks. Without their unwavering commitment our association would not be able to keep up its present level of activities.

During the 2024 AGM several participants joined in by expressing their heartfelt appreciation for the exceptional commitment of Johan and André. A warm applause followed and the AGM included in their thanks all the Committee members and all those who volunteered to organize our activities during the year, thus showing their strong and continued commitment to the NTAB.

3. Treasurer's report and accounts as on December 31st, 2023

NTAB Income & expenditure account 2023

Income	2022		Expenditure	2022	
Membership	3098,00	2876	Administration & mailing	581,52	503
Surplus on events	5797,16	3790	Donations to NT England	416,36	6009
Donations received	300,00		Expense previous year	0,00	0
Sundries (exchange difference)			website	261,05	193
			Sundries (exchange difference)		1
	<hr/>			<hr/>	
	9195,16	6666		1258,93	6706
			Net income	7936,23	-40
	<hr/>			<hr/>	
	9195,16	6666		9195,16	6666
	<hr/> <hr/>			<hr/> <hr/>	

NTAB Balance sheet as at 31 December 2023

Assets	2022		Liabilities	2022	
Current account	26963,96	25030	Proposed donation to NT England	0,00	6000
			Subs received in advance	300,00	130
			Received this year for next	216,00	388
	26963,96	25030		<hr/>	
			Retained end previous year	18511,73	18552
			Result current year	7936,23	-40
			Retained end this year	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<hr/>			26447,96	18512
	26963,96	25030		<hr/>	
	<hr/> <hr/>			26963,96	25030
	<hr/> <hr/>			<hr/> <hr/>	

The 2024 AGM was given a short presentation of the NTAB's accounts on the basis of our Auditor's report (which was made available to all participants during the AGM and is

also attached to the present report). Special attention was drawn to the Auditor's conclusions regarding the financial administration which, according to the Auditor, was in urgent need of being better organized.

The Chair informed the AGM that the Committee, during its meeting on 8 April, had immediately followed up on the Auditor's report by agreeing on measures to improve the financial administration perfectly in line with the Auditor's remarks.

2. Auditor's report

The full Auditor's report is attached.

The 2024 AGM: see above. The AGM expressed deep appreciation for the Auditor's conclusions and took note of the Committee's determination to act accordingly.

3. Election of Committee members and the officers until the next AGM

According to our constitution, the Committee consists of 4 officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and not less than 5 other members, elected at the AGM among associated members.

All the Committee members agreed to remain in their functions, including our chair.

Annick Dobbeleer joined the Committee on a provisional basis in January and needs to be elected formally by the AGM, as well as Ineke Crijns as new Treasurer and Magaret du Maine-Simpson as new Membership Officer.

Officers

Chair	Mr. Jan Grauls	Kraainem
Vice-Chair	Mrs. Carole Ducastel	Overijse
Secretary	Mr. Leo Nollet	Gent
Treasurer	Mrs. Ineke Crijns	Sint-Genesius-Rode

Committee members

Membership Officer	Margaret du Maine-Simpson	Brasschaat
Programme coordinator	Mr. André Ceulemans	Sint-Genesius-Rode
Webmaster / UK trip coordinator	Mr. Johan Vanbrabant	Lievegem
Programme planning	Mr. Emile Debacker	Kampenhout
	Mr. Filip Vanden Borre	Sint-Niklaas

Mr. Tim Middleton	Brussels
Mrs. Heather Charlton	Brussels
Mr. Peter Dufaux	Sint-Truiden
Mrs. Annick Dedobbeleer	Brussels

The 2024 AGM elected the officers and members mentioned above for the duration of one year and decided to relieve Leo from his mandate of Membership Officer, which Margaret kindly volunteered to take over, and from his mandate of Treasurer, which Ineke kindly volunteered to take over. The transfer of both mandates to these two Committee members was unanimously approved. The chair thanked Leo for his best endeavors while executing the three mandates. The AGM also confirmed Leo in his mandate as Secretary.

6. Appointment of an auditor until the next AGM

The AGM was invited to elect Mr. Henk Hoogstraten as our external (i.e. independent of the Committee) auditor. Henk was willing to accept a new one-year mandate if the AGM so decided.

The 2024 AGM unanimously elected Henk as our external auditor (i.e. independent of the Committee) and thanked him for his willingness to continue in this role.

7. Approval of the annual subscriptions for members of the National Trust, members of associations officially affiliated to the NT and non-members.

The Committee suggested that the annual subscriptions remain unchanged, as defined at the previous AGM.

Members of the NT or of associations affiliated to the NT:

- Annual fee of 25 euros for the first family member
- 20 euros for any subsequent member at the same address

Non-members:

- Annual fee of 35 euros for the first family member
- 25 euros for any subsequent member at the same address

New NT members and non-members, joining during the second half of the year, will be allowed to pay half of the annual fee.

The 2024 AGM decided unanimously to approve the above-mentioned proposals.

8. Approval of the Committee's recommendations for a donation to the National Trust in Britain

The AGM was invited to decide on the destination of our annual donations.

A reminder first:

Our *constitution* says that the Committee makes recommendations for 'the donations of any surplus Association funds raised during the preceding Financial Year to specific NT appeals or projects', to be approved by the AGM (section: Annual Meeting, point 5, of our constitution).

Our *website* (under 'donations to the National Trust') adds a 'Belgian connection' to the above: 'we (NTAB) donate an amount each year to support projects, generally of our choosing, and often with a Belgian Connection, at NT locations which we have visited'.

Total amount to be donated.

Our financial data for the year 2023 showed that we had transferred a financial reserve ('retained result') of at least € 22,000 from previous years, an unnecessarily high amount, which might be reduced through donations.

Since a reserve of €6,000 seemed sufficient to cover 'unexpected events' in the following year, an amount of approximately €10,000 could be donated this year.

The remaining financial assets, plus the surplus from the current year's events, are expected to be sufficient to cover next year's donations, while maintaining sufficient reserves. (Note: the year 2023 shows a surplus on events of almost 6,000 euros)

Suggestions for donations (in £)

There are three possibilities, each one based on past practices (complete list of donations on our website)

1. we donate to (a) NT property/ies we have visited the previous year (2023)
2. we donate to (a) NT property/ies we will be visiting during the following year (this year: June, Lincolnshire)
3. we donate to the NT overall organisation ('headquarters')

Rather than donating to the overall NT organization or to properties that we will visit later this year, the AGM suggested last year to donate to properties we have visited the previous year.

The Committee suggested that we maintain that position and that our donations would go to:

1. National Trust English riviera, Devon

A NT management group, which looks after four historic homes - including Agatha Christie's Greenway (with Agatha Christie/Hercule Poirot as 'Belgian connection')

and the Arts and Crafts house of Coleton Fishacre - and miles of coastline and countryside around the English Riviera of South Devon.

Suggested amount: 5.200 £ (about 6.000 Euro)

2. Lytes Cary Manor, Somerset.

The family home of the botanist Henry Lyte (1529-1589), whose most important work was his translation of Rembert Dodoens's *Cruydeboeck* (Antwerp, 1554), another 'Belgian connection'.

Suggested amount: 2.600 £ (about 3.000 Euro)

The 2024 AGM unanimously approved the proposals to donate 5.200 £ (appr. 6.000 euros) to National Trust English Riviera, Devon, and 2.600 £ (appr. 3.000 euros) to Lytes Cary Manor, Somerset.

9. Any other business

It was also proposed that we make an exceptional financial contribution to the **Friends of Wells Cathedral Charity** as a gesture of gratitude towards Tom Burr, one of NTAB's founding fathers, who kindly offered to be our ('blue') guide during our visit of Wells Cathedral last September.

Suggested amount: 850 £ (about 1000 Euro)

The 2024 AGM approved the proposal to make an exceptional financial contribution of 850 £ (appr. 1.000 euros) to the Friends of Wells Cathedral Charity.

The Chairman will inform these three beneficiaries (National Trust English Riviera, Lytes Cary Manor and Wells Cathedral Charity) and ask them to specify what particular use will be made of our financial contributions.

ATTENDEES

Caldwell Jon & Jinni

Trestour Jean & Véro

Nollet Leo & Clara

Cock Nelly

Debacker Emile & José

Scott Linda

Taylor Elizabeth

Crijns Ineke

Hazlewood Carole

Fern Nick & Heather

Dedobbeleer Annick

Betson Joanna

du Maine Margaret & Ton

Middleton Tim & Janet

Vanbrabant Johan & Marilou

Grauls Jan

Humphreys David & Wendy

Ceulemans André & Gerda

Meerschan Pascale