

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

**at Gors-op-Leeuw**

**on 26 April 2025**

### **Agenda of the 2025 Annual General Meeting**

1. Approval of the draft minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting (pm)
2. Committee members' report
3. Treasurer's report and accounts, including membership status, as on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024
4. Auditor's report
5. Election of the Chairman, Committee members and officers until the next AGM
6. Appointment of the auditor until the next AGM
7. Approval of the annual subscriptions for members and associate members
8. Approval of the Committee's recommendations for the donations of association funds to the National Trust in Britain
9. Any other business

It is with great sadness that we learned about the passing away of Marc Servotte, our past chairman and longtime Committee member, on 28 November. A great friend of Britain, Marc was also a perfect gentleman, always good-humoured and genuinely interested in people he met. We miss him dearly. Many of us attended his funeral as a last farewell.

## **1. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 AGM**

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

## **2. Committee members' report (presented by the Chair)**

This report covers the period as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, up to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

As in previous years, we were able to offer to our membership 10 **monthly outings**, together with a **UK trip** (see below: the names mentioned after each activity are those of our members who volunteered to organise them)

On February 23th, 2024, we visited the Fort of Eben-Emael and the Vroenhoven bridge which played such a dramatic role during the 'Battle of Belgium' at the beginning of the Second World War.

In March, we visited two charming border towns, Maaseik, the presumed birthplace of the Flemish Primitives Jan and Hubert Van Eyck, and the 'postcard' village Thorn across the Belgian-Dutch border.

In April, the FelixArt Museum in Drogenbos opened its doors to us (we also held our 2023 AGM there), and we walked through the alpine garden in Huizingen.

Veurne and the Ten Duinen Abbey welcomed us most generously in May and displayed their impressive history, including the flourishing trade with England in the Middle Ages.

From 10-15 June, we went to the East Midlands and discovered Lincolnshire and the city of Lincoln, a less well-known, but highly interesting region.

In September we admired the vintage car collection of the Mahy family at Leuze, a unique experience, as well as the 18<sup>th</sup> century chateau d'Attre.

During a two-day visit in October, the very attractive town of Saint-Omer in Northern France showed us its rich heritage, including their Flemish roots, whereas La Couple, an impressive and massive old bunker, designed as a base for launching V2 rockets against London, reminded us of the threat posed by the Nazis at the end of the war.

Our visit to Beveren allowed us to discover a corner of Belgium few of us knew well, it combined the extraordinary beauty of the natural reserve 'Drowned Land

of Saeftinghe' with the frantic activity of the left-bank expansion of the Port of Antwerp.

We closed the 2024 programme with a visit to the 18<sup>th</sup> century headquarters of Herita, the Flemish National Trust, in the centre of Antwerp, where we got a highly interesting presentation of Herita's mission and activities, and where we also held our end-of-year reception.

Our **website** ([www.ntab.be](http://www.ntab.be)) has become a useful instrument to keep our membership informed about our past and future activities. Together with its blog, where members can post their impressions and pictures after our outings, our website is frequently 'visited'.

The **Committee** met four times. Within the Committee a new division of functions has been set up. Leo Nollet has transferred his treasurer's role to Ineke Crijns, and his membership officer's role to Margaret du Maine-Simpson, while remaining himself in charge of the Secretariat. The AGM will be invited to approve these changes.

The Chair, speaking on behalf of the entire membership, would like to express heartfelt thanks to all those who volunteered to insure a smooth running of all our activities.

A very special word of thanks goes to Johan Vanbrabant, our webmaster, blog editor and UK trip coordinator, as well as to André Ceulemans, the coordinator of our monthly outings, and all those who volunteered to organise these outings.

Ineke Crijns and Margaret du Maine-Simpson took over the treasurer's role and the membership secretary's role, thus relieving Leo from these duties. Ineke, Margaret and Leo form a perfect trio. Our thanks go to them too.

**3. Treasurer's report on events and accounts as on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024** (presented by our Treasurer Ineke)

**Assets**

<b>BANK ACCOUNT</b>	31/dec	2023	26.982,09
	31/dec	2024	<b>23.707,35</b>

**Surplus on Events**

<b>NTAB 2024 EVENTS</b>	<b>CODE</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>Balance</b>
	2402	25	1.408,00	1.407,00	1,00
	2403	30	1.655,00	1.328,00	327,00
	2404	29	1.600,00	1.276,00	324,00
	2405	23	1.353,00	1.272,50	80,50
UK-trip	2406	33	49.710,00	45.096,24	4.613,76
<i>pm: paid Feb 2025</i>	2406			323,11	<i>Invoice Fydell House</i>
	2409	19	1.178,00	1.036,00	142,00
	2410	18	1.580,00	1.237,00	343,00
	2411	27	2.030,00	1.973,63	56,37
	2412	37	1.815,00	1.942,04	(127,04)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>62.329,00</b>	<b>56.891,52</b>	<b>5.760,59</b>

**Membership Status**

Our paying membership seems to be declining and so does membership income, which requires reflection.

Membership secretary Margaret reports the following figures:

		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Full members	Single	15	19
	double	11	16
	Nr of members	37	51
Associate members	Single	23	28
	double	14	16
	Nr of members	51	60
<b>Total nr of members</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>111</b>
Membership Income		€2.815	€3.046

**4. Auditor's report** to the Chairman, Committee Members and members of the Association of National Trust Members in Belgium.

The AGM 2024 decided that the function of auditor for the year 2024 should be performed by Henk Hoogstraten. It is in this capacity that I audited the accounts of the Association of National Trust Members in Belgium for the year 2024.

The new treasurer, Ineke Crijns, made for the year 2024 use of single-entry bookkeeping. This in contrast to previous years, when double-entry bookkeeping was used.

The treasurer did not produce a balance sheet, nor did she make an income & expenditure sheet, so the auditor had to construct the following income & expenditure sheet and balance sheet.

Audit NTAB		2024		6/04/2025	
<i>Income and Expenditure Sheet</i>					
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>		<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>			<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Membership	€ 2.815,00	€ 3.046,00	<i>Running costs</i>		
Surplus on events	€ 5.760,59	€ 5.908,16	Administration & mailing	€ 15,73	€ 624,39
Donations received	€ -	€ 300,00	Assurance costs	€ 209,60	€ -
			Automation/Website	€ 1.012,25	€ 261,05
Result last year		€ -		€ 1.237,58	€ 885,44
	<u>€ 8.575,59</u>	<u>€ 9.254,16</u>	<i>Donations</i>		
			Donations NT-UK	€ 10.275,06	€ 6.416,36
			Contributions	€ 360,00	
				<u>€ 10.635,06</u>	<u>€ 6.416,36</u>
			<i>Previous year</i>		
			Membership 2023	€ 10,00	
			Event 2310	€ 653,00	€ -
			Bank difference	€ 18,13	
				<u>€ 681,13</u>	<u>€ -</u>
			<i>Finance costs</i>		
			Bank costs	€ 66,56	€ -
				€ -	€ -
				<u>€ 66,56</u>	<u>€ -</u>
			<i>Sundries</i>	€ 265,00	€ -
				<u>€ 12.885,33</u>	<u>€ 7.301,80</u>
			<b>Net income</b>	€ -4.309,74	€ 1.952,36
	<u><u>€ 8.575,59</u></u>	<u><u>€ 9.254,16</u></u>		<u><u>€ 8.575,59</u></u>	<u><u>€ 9.254,16</u></u>

This Balance Sheet and the Income & Expenditure Sheet 2024 mentioned the following figures:

**Balance Sheet 31-12-2024**

Assets (bank accounts)	<u>€ 23.707,35</u>	
Membership income 2025		€ 1.035,00
<i>Retained results</i>		
Retained end of previous year		€ 26.982,09
Result current year		<u>€ - 4.309,74</u>
		<u>€ 22.672,35</u>
	<u>€ 23.707,35</u>	<u>€ 23.707,35</u>

**Findings**

In 2024, after Ineke Crijns took over the function of treasurer, the documents (including invoices) could be presented for control.

However, the use of single-entry bookkeeping made it difficult to come to a balanced balance sheet and income & expenditure sheet.

**Donation National Trust England**

There is in my opinion no problem to give a generous donation to The National Trust England.

**Declaration**

In condition that my findings are taken into account, I can confirm that the Income & Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as on 31 December 2024, give a fairly representation of the financial position of the Association on that date, based on the bookkeeping of the bank mutations.

I will with pleasure answer any question.

Henk Hoogstraten

Auditor NTAB

Poppel, 30 March 2025

## **5. Election of Committee members and 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.

### 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 secretary

Mrs. Margaret du Maine-Simpson (Brasschaat)

#### Programme coordinator

Mr. André Ceulemans (Sint-Genesius-Rode)

#### Webmaster/Blog Editor/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)

## **6. Appointment of an auditor until the next AGM**

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

## **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, as defined at the previous AGM, remain unchanged.

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.

## **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 and amounts of our annual donations.

### **8.1. Reminder on how we select**

According to our constitution the Committee makes recommendations to the AGM 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' (the complete list of our donations is on our website).

This leaves us with three practical possibilities, each one based on past practices:

- a) we donate to NT properties we have visited the previous year,
- b) we donate to NT properties we will be visiting this year: (June, Cheshire- North Wales)
- c) we donate to the NT organisation, overall ('headquarters') or regional (London & South East).

## **8.2. Total amount to be donated.**

Our financials for 2024 show that we have a financial reserve ('retained earnings') of approximately €23.700 carried over from previous years.

As a reserve of € 6.000 seems sufficient to cover 'unexpected events' in the following year, this seems to be an unnecessarily high amount, which we may want to reduce in annual stages through donations.

We propose to donate an amount of around €12.000 (approximately 10.000 £) this year.

## **8.3. Suggested beneficiaries and amounts for donations**

*(Value in Euro, to be adjusted to the rounded equivalent in GBP)*

We propose to donate to two NT properties that we visited in 2024, and to the NT region on which NTAB depends.

- **The Workhouse, Southwell** – 4000 € (about £ 3.500), which would make a big difference to them, while we found the place most inspiring, surprisingly similar to the free Colony of Benevolence (Kolonie van Weldadigheid) in Belgium (Wortel, 1815-1870, Unesco World Heritage Site).
- **Gunby Hall** at Spilsby – 1000 € (about 850 £), because of its connection to our King Leopold III, whose picture is displayed in the dining room. We can ask the property to put a short explanation next to the picture.
- **The NT region London & South East**, the NT region that NTAB formally depends on – 7.000 € (about 5.900 £). *(Can we choose a specific project from the LSE region funding list?)*

## **9. Any other business**