

# CHURCH BECOMES NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE

**TOGETHER  
THE  
INHABITANTS  
AND POLICY  
MAKERS  
APPROVE THE  
NEW USE OF  
THE CHURCH  
IN GODSHEIDE**



*Residents celebrate the opening of their new community centre in the old church*

Last night the residents of Godsheide and the Hasselt policy makers organised a big party celebrating their joint decision to create a new community centre in an old church. This place will unite all kinds of social activities like childcare, care for the elderly and various different cultural and ecological initiatives.

The opening of the community center coincided with the announcement of a new bridge, which will connect the two parts of the centre of the town of Godsheide. The bridge will be built in its former location (it was destroyed in WWII), a position which has always had a good connection with the centre of Godsheide and therefore also with the new community centre.

The residents and policy makers see the bridge as a bridge of activities, a new public place from which you can see, amongst other things, fantastic sunrises and sunsets. The bridge will be explicitly accessible to everyone, including those who are less mobile, but not for cars. Moreover, around the bridge and in its vicinity new alternative forms of housing, like dyke houses, will be developed. These homes are typically situated on, under or alongside a dyke.

The opening of the community centre in the old church launches a number of grand plans, reason enough to celebrate with the leftover sacramental wine.



Residents stimulate the much needed bridge by the Godsheide canal

# GOODLI(F)E ORGANISES PLAYFUL ACTIVITY FOR BRIDGE

Every resident of Godsheide still remembers. Before the war there was a bridge connecting the two sides of Godsheide. During the second World War the residents blew up this bridge to stop the Germans. After the war, the bridge was replaced by a temporary structure which unfortunately was brought down by a boat. The bridge was replaced by a ferry to take the residents and numerous schoolchildren to the other side every day. This ferry caused what is still known to this day as the disaster of Godsheide: 35 children

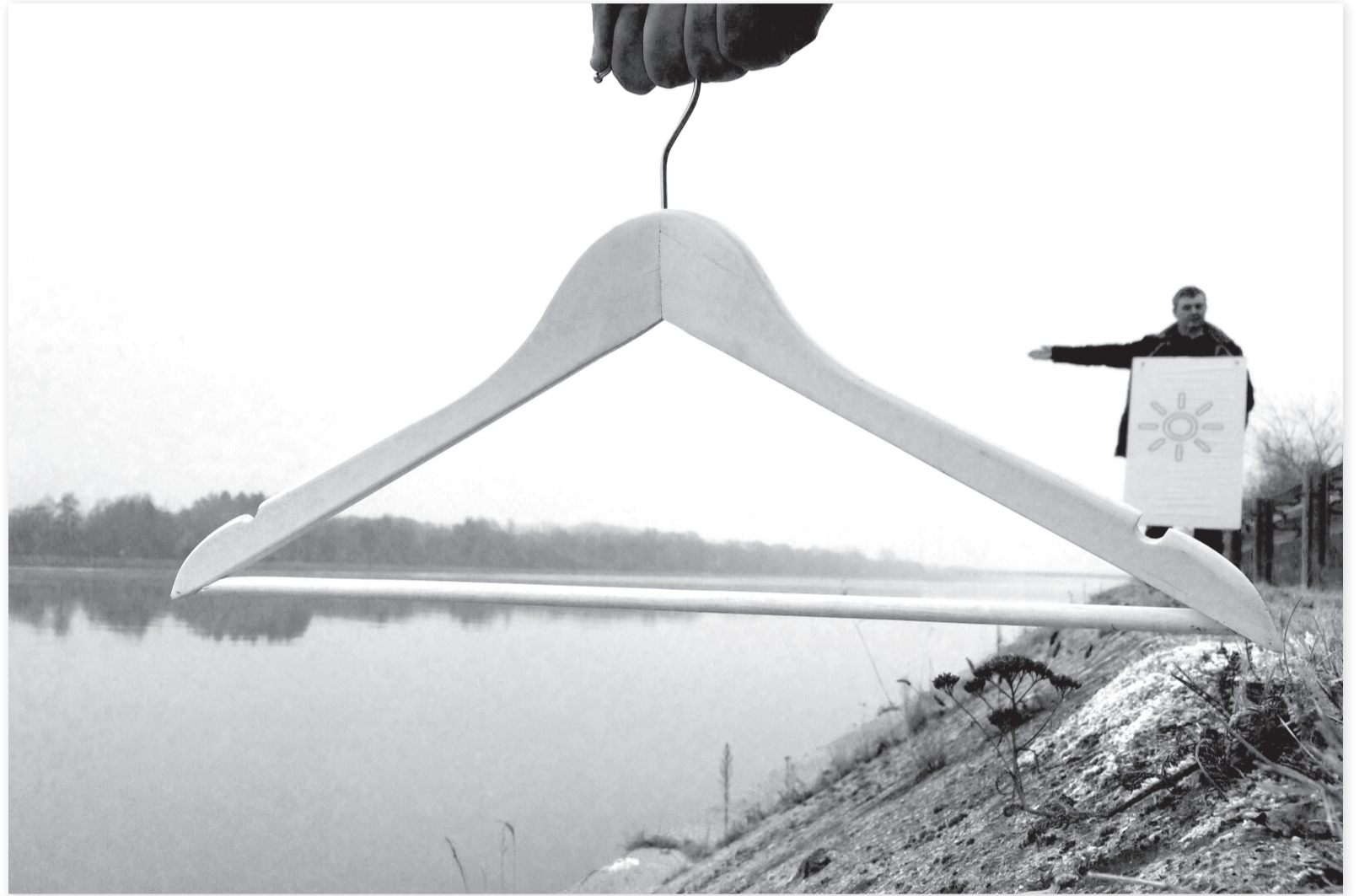
and 2 adults drowned. Because the death of those children is still very much alive in this borough of Hasselt, the two sides have not been linked since and Godsheide has been split in two.

Some residents and policy makers in Godsheide announced yesterday that they want to rebuild the bridge. The local action group Goodli(f)e doesn't attach much value to this statement because often promises have not been kept. Therefore, with respect

for the history of the disaster of Godsheide, at several moments in the week they hold a playful action to reclaim the bridge from the policy makers. Along with several residents they simulate a bridge extending from the old pathway from the pub "De Zwaan". A large attendance is expected, because the bridge is high on the agenda of many of Godsheide's inhabitants.

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## FOR 10 YEARS THE CO-OPERATIVE “CITYDEPOT GODSHEIDE” HAS BEEN PROVIDING GODSHEIDE WITH GOODS AND SERVICES VIA THE CANAL



For the co-operative “CityDepot Godsheide” the bridge is an important link

“City Depot Godsheide”, the key supplier of goods and services in Godsheide, turned ten years old today. This depot was created after a brainstorm on the future of Godsheide between the inhabitants of Godsheide, the residents’ association “De Unie Godsheide”, the Department of Architecture of the University of Hasselt and the art collective FoAM. The participants felt a

great need for a co-operative to provide Godsheide with goods and services via the canal. “The term co-operative refers to a form of self-organization of producers or consumers, aimed at increasing their economic capacity through economies of scale”, clarifies Frank Bekkers, who has been involved from the very start.

Together with many enthusiastic producers and consumers, CEO Luc Jollings is the main driving force and visionary behind the co-operative “Citydepot Godsheide”.

For Jollings the Bailey bridge is a major key to the success of the depot. “The plan was conceived within a holistic community where everyone and everything

are connected “says Jollings. “Those connections, for a large part, run via the former Bailey bridge over the canal“. The Citydepot was also a key player in striving for a new park along the Kleinstraat. The city has just let them know they will take out a number of oak trees to make way for the park.

After ten years, “Citydepot” has clearly not yet played out its role.

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# 10 YEARS CITYDEPOT GODSHEIDE

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**IN SILENCE,  
THE RESIDENTS  
OF GODSHEIDE  
PLEA FOR AN  
OPEN AND GREEN  
SPACE**

# **SILENT PICNIC ON THE GOLF COURSE**

On Sunday morning, December 1st the residents took over the golf courses in Godsheide with a silent picnic. Over the past few years, the surrounding area has been built up by various developers with no attention to the development of open space.

Today it is mainly the residents themselves who take on the establishment of open areas or rest spaces and make arrangements about parking, playstreets and communal gardens. With this silent picnic they want to start a conversation with the developers and policy makers about the use of the green space around the golf course as a playground and park zone.



# NEIGHBOURHOOD STARTS SCHOOL THROUGH “CROWDFUNDING”



In 2014, the residents placed a bomb under the maintenance of the school

Yesterday was the festive opening of the new classrooms, ten years after the collapse of the local school in Godsheide. It puts an end to the use of the scouts premises by the children and their teachers. The construction of the new school was made possible by the crowdfunding initiatives organised by various groups and associations in Godsheide.

The idea behind crowdfunding is that many people invest a small amount and that all those small investments together finance the entire project. “It’s about time,” say the organizers, “after years of volunteering

and spaghetti fundraisers we were only able to just about spruce up and maintain the old place.” In the disastrous night of 29th to 30th November 2014, the containers and part of the school building on the Kleinstraat collapsed. To this day the exact cause is unclear. Was it due to the inadequate and unsafe infrastructure or was it foul play? The police investigation never brought clarity. The residents saw this collapse as a figurative “bomb”, shattering the way the school was being maintained. This bomb became the mascot of a number of silent protests in the town, uniting different needs, wishes and voices about

the school buildings and their maintenance.

Today, we can replace this bomb by a “like”, because the school is a rare example of what residents can accomplish if they work together.



## THE FUTURE WAS ALREADY HERE IN 2014

ABOUT MOVE, A MOVEMENT OF FUTURE THINKERS AND MAKERS

During a workshop in 2014 wherein scenarios were created for Godsheide in 2024, the citizens were not just dreaming and thinking about the future. Way back in 2004, the residents of Godsheide started the MOVE project, in which they drew up a vision of the green spaces in their town and the meeting and living spaces. They emphasized the need for public spaces and platforms in which to meet, by organising a wide variety of activities; from sporting events to an arts route. Bart Lambrichts was one of the pioneers of this initiative and even today, in 2024, he remains very active in the residents’ association Union Godsheide. He is delighted to see that 20 years later the future plans MOVE conceived, have largely become reality: “Things are moving in the right direction today and it is wonderful to see.”



Residents meet up at "Bij Vieke"

# 2024 IS TODAY!

Exactly 10 years ago, on a sunny yet cold November morning, some 15 residents of Godsheide met up in the warm cafe "bij Vieke." They had gathered after an appeal from the residents' association "De Unie Godsheide". During a two-day workshop, they would depict the the near future (2024) of Godsheide, together with the Department of Architecture of the University of Hasselt and art collective FoAM. They already shared a dream: an open and involved set of policy makers, supported by strong cultural organisations. They were inspired by succesful, positive actions from the past (from paper collections to fairground activities) driven by passionate people from the community (such as priests and schoolteachers). This workshop especially showed a need for public space and platforms to share and exchange visions, plans, needs and differences and to start initiatives.

The residents shaped Godsheide as a growing, green environment. According to them, this environment is driven by local services (for example, an own school, local care) and supported by a local economy -work in their own area-, but also by other types of economies, co-operatives and sharing economies.

These more open ideas took shape in a number of concrete initiatives. With the co-operative "Citydepot Godsheide" the various local actors and traders took the provision of goods and services into their own hands. The new local school was also built through crowdfunding in-

itiatives by local groups and associations. With their playful action, the activists of the collective Goodli(f)e underscored that in terms of mobility and infrastructure, there is still much work to be done: "Promises and infrastructure do not always make a good marriage in Godsheide," says a cheerful campaigner. At the time the residents anticipated the influx of newcomers by creating various events and activities around the parsonage, the church, the bridge of activities and the café "bij Vieke" where people can get to know each other.

Today, these initiatives are still inspiring examples of towns, municipalities and individuals that take their future into their own hands. It is no coincidence that this newspaper carries the title: "The Future is today".

This newspaper is a collaboration between the residents' association Unie Godsheide, research group Arck (Faculty Architecture and Art of Hasselt University), FoAM (network of trans-disciplinary labs for speculative culture).

It is a record of the Future Fictions Godsheide workshop in November 2014 and published on the occasion of the exhibition Future Fictions in Z33, Hasselt.

[www.fo.am](http://www.fo.am)  
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[www.godsheide.be/de-unie-godsheide/](http://www.godsheide.be/de-unie-godsheide/)

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