



# OUDENAARDE, GROWING GREEN CITY.



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# WELCOME TO OUDENAARDE

Oudenaarde combines the best of two worlds: the charm of a relatively small but cosy historical town on the banks of the river Scheldt but yet providing all the facilities you encounter in a much bigger town.

The town is easy to get to by car, bike or public transport (frequent and direct connection to Brussels, Ghent and Bruges). This way Oudenaarde is a perfect starting point to visit these larger cities.

Situated in the valley of the Scheldt the town is surrounded by the hills and hillocks which constitute The Flemish Ardennes. The combination of the green district – ‘Flanders’ Most Beautiful Landscape’– with its rich art-historical past and patrimony, with its authentic area and buildings transforms Oudenaarde into a magnet for tourists and sightseers.

All sights are within walking distance (2,2 km) from the centre.

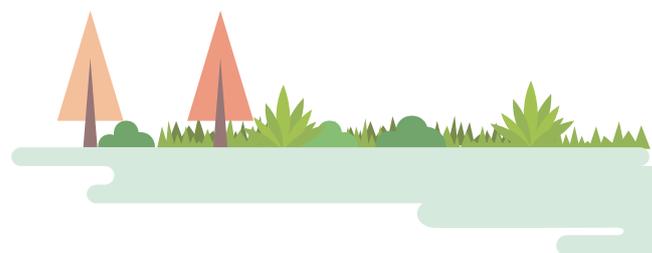
Recently, new projects to renew the town scape have been laid out, such as the reconstruction of the quays and banks along the Scheldt, the new Scheldekop, a peninsular in the Scheldt, the new layout of the town park and the market place.

This market, of old the beating heart of the town, is now the place to be for a chat, over a glass of beer or with a good meal. Traffic has been drastically reduced and with the new plantation the function of the square is now revalued.

With its famous cobbled green hills and hillocks Oudenaarde is also the background of The Tour of Flanders, especially since the finishing line of this world famous cycle race has been drawn near the town centre.

Oudenaarde has proved to be a surprisingly interesting and charming town to visit or to stay at.

So, why wouldn't you come?



# PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Every town in an urban area is an important factor for the quality of living and working of its inhabitants. Within the boundaries of the town the local authorities aim to concentrate the urban structures in order to safeguard the countryside, keeping out those new developments that might harm the natural beauty of the landscape.

After all, Oudenaarde is part of The Flemish Ardennes, one of the most traditional landscape in Flanders. The hills and hillocks, the woods of beech, the cobbled tracks, woods with wells, listed churches and protected rural area are typical of our region.

The town and country planning concentrates on the preservation and strengthening of these environmental structures.

## POLICY IN SPATIAL AND ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURES

But in contrast to this, inside the municipal boundaries the focus of the town policy is on concentrating the **urban structures**: this implies the compact building of higher premises but at the same time the creation or development of **green area**, but only if the added value is socially acceptable. This way the town will get more public open space, more light and more air.

Projects to construct '**slow connections**' (such as cycling freeways), sports and leisure centres, offering car-sharing are now being realized, which will not put a burden on the ecological and environmental context of town life.

If the car is king in Flanders, the cyclist in Oudenaarde will be Emperor: actually, Oudenaarde is the bike-rider's heaven on earth (but sometimes it is hellishly hard to ride uphill!).

This way, the local authorities try to enhance the quality of life of

pedestrians and cyclists; by giving the town centre new plantings, life in town has become an attractive place to live in, to work or to join social life. And this is realized with the participation of the citizens.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS POLICY

A nice example of this is **the new site built on the left bank of the Scheldt**. This area of 200 ha, bordering the town centre is cut through by the Scheldt. Inside this area are two old and abandoned factories, the town sports centre, a brickyard and marshland that is partially exploited by the brickyard. This area has recently got a new and lively function.

The town has also made a partnership with the Provincial Government of East-Flanders. Both authorities are working together in a masterplan to finally implement or realize this plan taking special care of the ecological aspects. This cooperation is based on 4 pillars:

landscape, water, mobility and circular economy. Different target groups such as citizens, owners and the public body have been consulted through bilateral consultation, project conferences and holding companies.

**The railwaystation square and surroundings** are equally being renewed according to this principle: if the local residents want more green and less concrete, they will get it!

A third example of town development projects and participation of the citizens is the reconversion of **the Saffre Frères site**.

On the old and abandoned factory premises a new residential area is built respecting the special ecological character of the **surrounding**: cars should give way to pedestrians; 265 families will live in this green setting. The economical destination of one of the old factory remnants was chosen by employers and citizens. And a small wood was laid out that will bring biodiversity within the urban setting.

## OUDENAARDE, MOTOR OF THE ECONOMY OF THE REGION

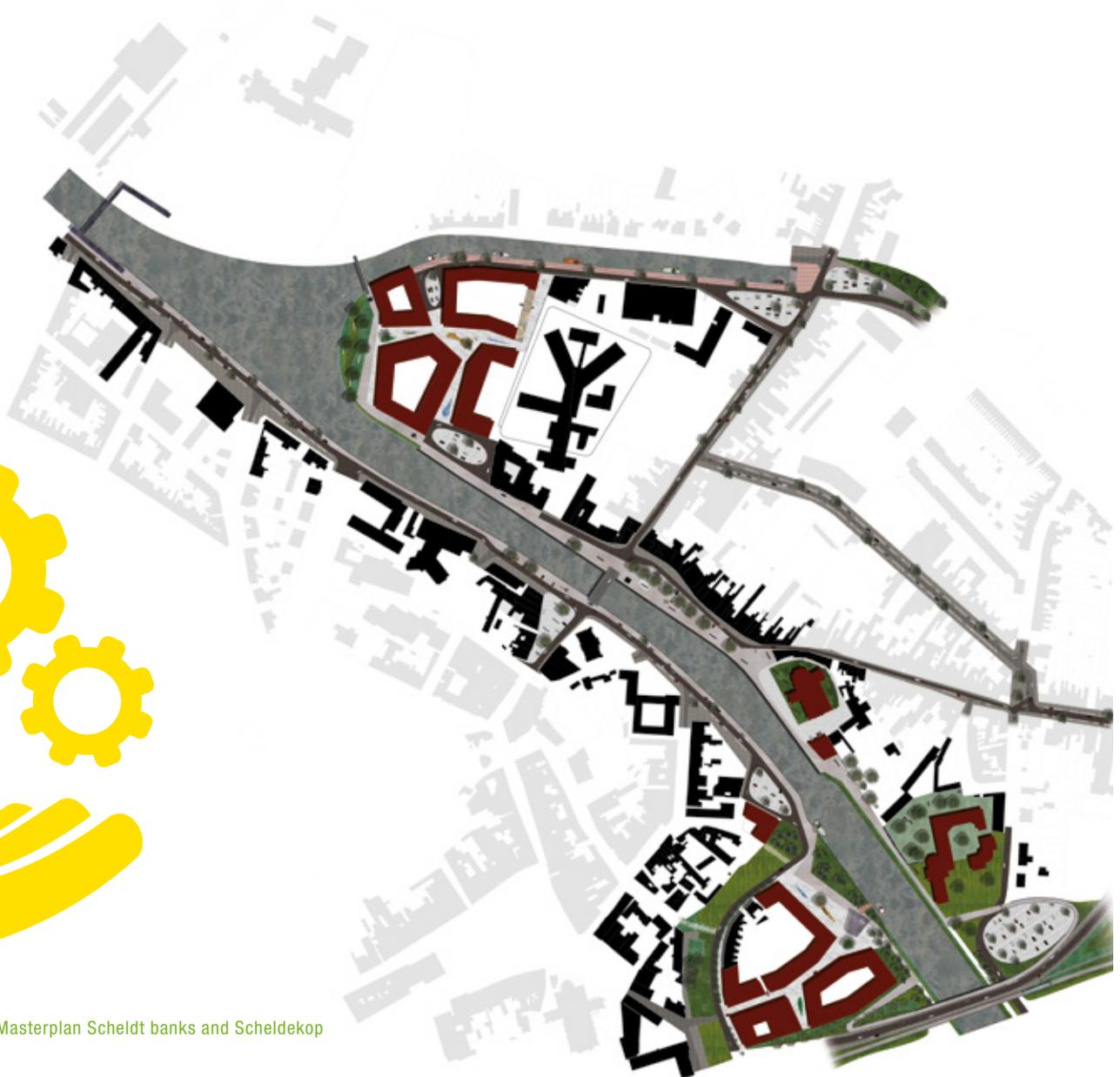
Enterprising is a point of special interest in the town and country planning in Oudenaarde.

Oudenaarde is well equipped with schools, hospital, law court, administration offices and consequently

has a high degree of employment. The town provides 14,000 jobs and in doing so it is an important employer in the region.

To consolidate this economical position and if possible to strengthen it the municipal authorities had a detailed study made in December 2018; at the same time, a study of the

housing shortage was ordered. With the results of both studies the local government has a good survey of the dynamics of the spatial challenges for the years to come, allowing them to use objective data to delineate a correct sustainable development and environmental planning.



Masterplan Scheldt banks and Scheldekop

# SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

In 2015 Oudenaarde signed the Mayor's Convention promising to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emission by 20 % by 2020. A climate plan was drawn up to further rational use of energy and more specifically renewable energy.

## SUSTAINABLE PATRIMONY

The local authorities aim to realize energy low or energy neutral buildings on the one hand and to maximize the historical value of this patrimony and the modern conveniences inside the buildings. From the first drafts a multi-disciplinary team of experts is engaged to check the achievement of the sustainable objectives.

A nice example of this is the newly built Town Academy of Music and Word.

Summer heat is held off by special window panes and awning; in winter the cold is kept away by insulation (K-level 27). Cost of electricity and drinking-water are decreased by using led-lights, solar panels and collectors; flush toilets using rainwater reduce the con-

sumption of expensive drinking water.

Other projects built with respect to sustainable development are a.o. the new sports hall, (replacing the older one), the new indoor swimming pool, the renovation of the old assisted living complex into Sociaal Huis, the building of 2 new assisted living centres and the new fire station.

## PUBLIC LIGHTING AND ILLUMINATION

Because public lighting and illumination cost a lot of energy the municipal authorities reduce this cost by investing ± 400.000 € every year in the replacement of light bulbs into LEDs, by only illuminating important traffic situations (cross-roads and residential areas), and by

extinguishing the lights at 23 p.m. systematically.

## OUDENAARDE, SUSTAINABLE TOWN

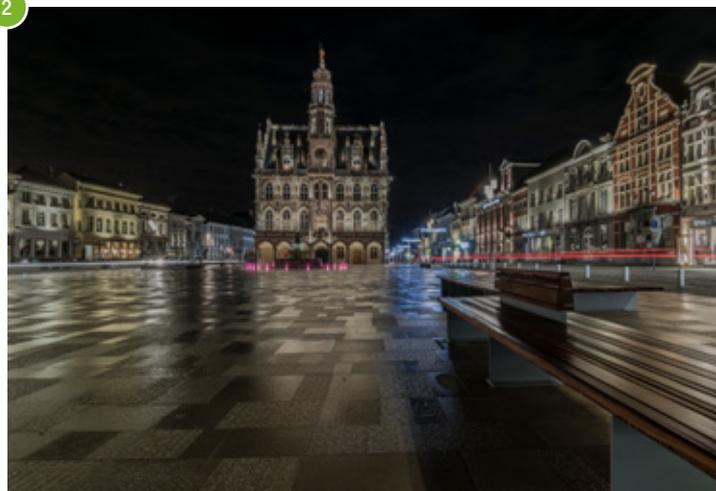
But a climate plan must not only involve the municipal offices and services, but should also involve citizens, clubs and companies.

In 2017 Oudenaarde received the financial support of the EFRO, the European Fund for Regional Development for its energy coaching project ZOVER. Enterprises in Oudenaarde, Ninove and Kruisem were coached free of charge by the implementation of energy saving measures. This project ended 30th of April 2019 and was successful with 45 enterprises, 20 of which were situated in Oudenaarde.

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To reduce the energy need of households the focus is mainly on sustainable construction. The town offers free building advice, premiums to install sustainable energy-systems and took over the interest charges for inhabitants who contracted an energy loan.

A financial grant is given to clubs and societies taking part in climate projects.

Because the quality of air is important for all life the local government cannot simply be on the sidelines. Together with Kampenhout, Schoten, Sint-Niklaas and Dilbeek, Oudenaarde sent in a project City of Things of the Agency of Innovation and Enterprise. Its aim is to acquire the know-how about establishing a net of sensors to monitor the measurement of the air quality and to record the requirements concerning hardware and software. This will facilitate the communication of these results to the inhabitants. The project started 9th of December 2018 and was coordinated by the Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (the Flemish Environmental Organisation) and received a grant from the VLAIO (the Flemish Agency for Innovation and Enterprise).

The use of water is another

important factor. 83,15% of the waste water is purified in Oudenaarde, which is one of the best results in the Flemish Ardennes. Between 2014-19 almost a million € was invested in sewer systems.

Apart from this, the town also pursues an active policy in the application of rain and precipitation: two buffer zones were created to relieve areas prone to flooding; furthermore, a team of architects and engineers found solutions to lead the precipitation back to the aquifer by means of large greenbelts and by using tiles letting through rain water. This will reduce the paved surface from 97% to 40%, e.g. in Saint-Joseph square.

Waste is subject to the diftar-system: the polluter pays. Flanders has quite a reputation in Europe in the collection of separated waste. Refuse remaining after separation of recyclable elements is collected in containers and is weighed; only bulky refuse, timber and hard plastic waste brought to the waste container park must be paid for at a low charge in order not to discourage people from coming to the container park.

In 2018 Oudenaarde was selected by the Flemish Government to tackle the problem of street litter and

illegal dumping of waste. This coaching project has 5 pillars: infrastructure, environment, participation, sensitization, communication and finally maintenance. The town has its own team of workers to clean the streets; they are helped by a group of voluntary workers and of 'ploggers', (quite unique in Flanders) collecting litter while jogging.

The control of weeds and pests is effected by hotwater- weedbrushers and trimmers; pesticides are no longer applied in the town's gardens or park.

Soil erosion is a problem in Flanders: in hilly regions the draining away of the soil by the rain must be prevented to preserve the precious fertile soil.

Because of the hills in Flanders, especially loamy and sandy soils fall victim to erosion. These soils were listed in a plan countering erosion in 2005. Since 2006 Oudenaarde cooperates with an office of the Province of East-Flanders, which advises farmers how to prevent and restrict erosion by carrying out adequate operations on the field.



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1. Town Academy of Music and Word
2. Public lighting with LEDs
3. Erosion control in the Flemish Ardennes





# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

A town is pleasant to live in if there are nice places where people can meet: a snug pub, an outdoor café or pub, attractive shops, a lively square, an interesting passageway... Building this pleasant atmosphere to improve the quality of living of its inhabitants, tourists and entrepreneurs is exactly what Oudenaarde is striving for.

Oudenaarde is a **historical town** that received its town privilege as early as 1189.

Today Oudenaarde is a **modern town** brimming with energy but it still fosters its mediaval aspect in its network of streets and in lots of eye-catching monuments.

In the town centre the town square with the famous **town hall** in late Gothic style (1526-1537) and its magnificent belfry, listed as UNESCO world heritage deserves particular notice.

The medieval **clothmakers' hall** at the back of the town hall was built in 1330.

In it you can admire the late medieval roof-trusses and the most important works of art from Oudenaarde: the wonderful tapestries.

Oudenaarde is proud of its more than 100 **protected monuments** –only Ghent has more in our province- of which a great part belongs to the religious heritage: old monasteries and nunneries, the Hospital, the Black Nun's Convent and unique Gothic churches: the

collegiate church Saint-Walburgis and Our Lady's Church (1234) at Pamele in Scheldt Gothic style attract thousands of tourists every year.

The **market square** is the place to be. Two years ago the municipal authorities had it reconstructed into a new meeting place, laid out in French stone, the colour of which grades nicely into the white shades of the town hall.

A new lighting system for the square and the surrounding streets was drawn up and put into operation.

Three **municipal projects** in the town's heart and on walking distance from the town square were set up.

**Droesbeke** closed the gap between the buildings at this side of the market place; the site of the Tour of Flanders Centre is a modern realization of bringing together luxury flats and the museum of the Tour of Flanders; **Ham** in the neighbourhood links the densely built on market square and residential tourism: the town

stimulated the building of public housing, together with a new hotel Leopold (65 rooms).

Both places, Droesbeke and Ham have been brightened up with smaller squares, gangways, green areas and public works of arts, which enliven this part of the town.

**De Scheldekop** is still being developed. Oudenaarde was the first to be nominated for a project concerning town planning of the Flemish Government. Oudenaarde received a three million Euro grant. The first fase (the building of residences) is finished and the houses are lived in meanwhile; the second phase (the building of the shell) of other dwellings has started; the third phase is now being planned. This building project generated millions of Euro by private investment in the built-on section of this area.

New building projects inside the historical town centre are first examined and eventually adjusted before the building application can be sent in.



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This way the old town merges well with the new urban developments in the town centre which transforms the town into an amazingly new complex.

And perhaps works of art can consolidate this experience. In 2016 the town project Scaldis exhibited several new sculptures along the renewed banks of the river Scheldt; performances and shows by local clubs enlivened this event.

In a modern town, art as part of the streetscape is as important as trees in the landscape.

Modern sculptures by renowned artists (such as Johan Tahon, Kris Martin, Philippe J. Tonnard, Myriam Eykens, Peter Bijls and Jul Vuylsteke) lend style to the site where they are shown.

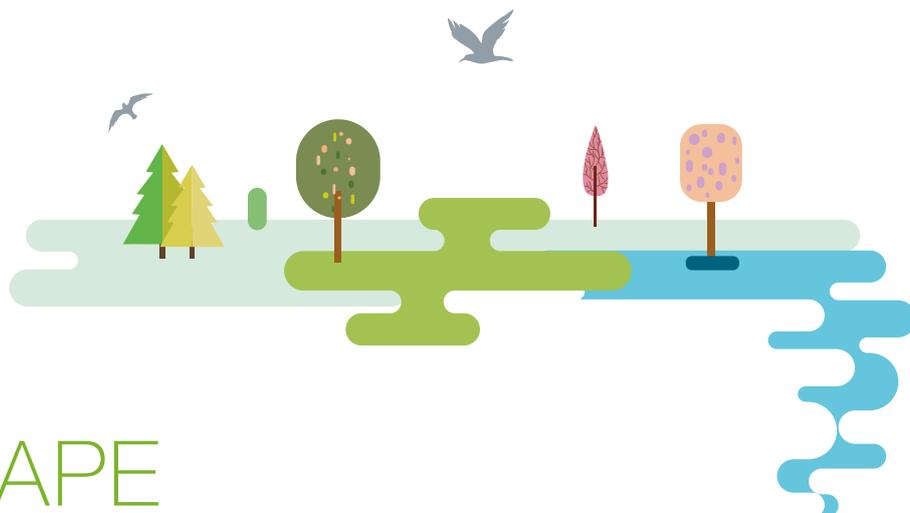


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1. Town square with town hall
2. Cyclists near the banks of the river Scheldt
3. Modern sculpture by artist Johan Tahon



# LANDSCAPE

Characteristic of the Flemish Ardennes is a fragmented landscape with fields, green woods, meadows and pastures but above all: the valley of the river Scheldt and the hills and hillocks. In this region Oudenaarde is the magnetic coil attracting and bringing about new developments.

## WOODS

The old forests around Oudenaarde (Edelareberg, Koppenberg and along the banks of the Scheldt between Volkegem and Eine) show a diversity of trees and flowers. The bluebell (wild hyacinth) is not found everywhere in Europe, but the Flemish Ardennes host tens of hectares of these age-old flowers, which is quite unique.

Legal protection and adequate forest management resulted in the natural expansion of Koppenbergbos (80 ha) and 't Bos 't Ename (200 ha) and in the reappearance of roe deer and the stone marten. 't Bos 't Ename was listed among GENO (Great Unit of Nature in Development)

The forest Volkegembos is now afforested on the loamy soils of a former loam exploitation. This municipal forest suits the directives of the habitat area (SBZ-H) Forests of the Flemish Ardennes and forests in the south of East-Flanders. Now 11 ha have been afforested; part of it is a 'birthday wood': young parents are invited to plant a tree for their child in this forest and most of them

comply! Together with a part of the Natuurpuntforest Volkegembos will be extended to 30 ha.

One problem is the appearance of exotic species such as *Heracleum mantegazzianum* and *Myiophyllum aquaticum*, but both are being eradicated.

## THE VALLEY OF THE RIVER SCHELDT

Until the 1960's the banks of the Scheldt and the adjoining pastures were flooded in winter; every year a fine layer of clay was deposited in the depth of the valley, resulting in the formation of heavy clay soil, which is until now the reason of existence of the brick industry along the Scheldt. In the years 1950-60 the course of the river was straightened out; cut off meanders changed into pools without function, except for nature, yielding new **plant and animal life**: aspen, cuckooflower and the marsh-marigold; special butterflies, dragonflies, some kind of trout and even the beaver can be spotted there and in the wildlife sanctuaries of Langemeersen and

Heurnemeersen. Perhaps the otter will reappear soon in our region.

## OPEN FIELDS

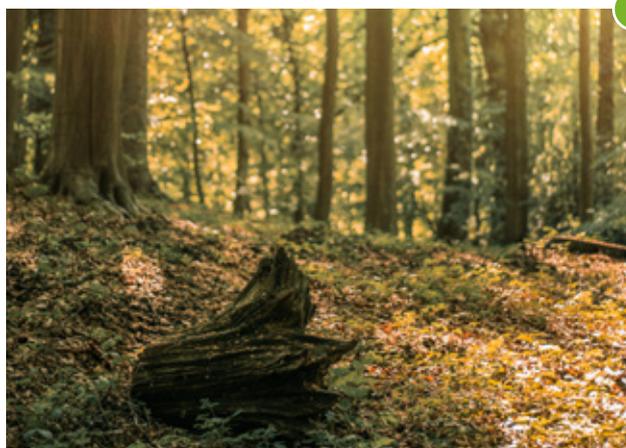
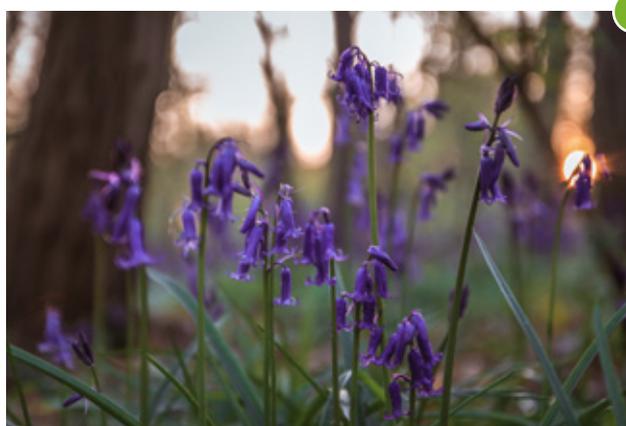
Leaving the Scheldt we meet quite a different landscape: large, open treeless fields on the ridge of the hill and cut through by brooks. Lots of fountain-heads are found there and that is why the oldest farmhouses were built near these wells.

## OLD TREES, OLD BENCHMARKS

Some old trees are historical benchmarks in the landscape.

Only some of these old trees have survived: the Saint-Hilary lime tree in Mullem and the rows of planes surrounding Ename square. These trees reappear in the name of streets, such as the 'Lindestraat' (Limestreet). Interesting articles were published about these trees by the town's keeper of the archives.

- 1. Winter landscape of the Flemish Ardennes
- 2. Tree as a historical benchmark in the landscape
- 3. Bluebells
- 4 & 5. Koppenbergbos





# GREEN SPACES

The planning and realization of green and open spaces in a town contributes to no small extent to the citizens' feeling of well-being. Yet, stringent rules laid down by the Government regulate green areas, from the planting, the maintenance and eventually the eradication of green elements. Maintenance should be free of the use of pesticides, the choice of plants must be in harmony with the surroundings and should respect the biodiversity, the life of the bees and the climatological restrictions.

So, grass meadows are now being converted into flower meadows by using wild flowerbulbs or by sowing; mowing and trimming in phases will improve the biodiversity.

## THE LIEDTSPARK WITH ALLOTMENT GARDENS

Oudenaarde has a lot of green areas: a town park, allotment gardens, an educational centre about nature and a nature reserve.

**Liedtspark** of 6 ha with **allotment gardens** is the green lung in the heart of the town.

This park was laid out as an English landscape park with footpaths, sports facilities, a pond with fountain, large greens, bowers, an icehouse and hundreds of standard trees. It was originally a private garden with a nice pavillion going back to the end of the 19th century.

And recently a ravelin was reconstructed with a subsidy from EFRO, the European Fund for Regional Development; it is the only remnant of the ramparts of Oudenaarde. This monument of earth was erected according to plans of 1819-1829 as part of the Wellington barrier. It is the only remaining one out of 5 planned ravelins, built on the groundwork of an older bulwark and bastions.

The **allotment gardens** in the town

centre are quite unique and can be walked through across a central pathway.

Both the park, the castle and the gardens have been listed as protected areas.

## NATURE IN AND AROUND TOWN

The municipal authorities have invested for years and years to safeguard, to develop and to open the green space to the public. The town has its own team of environmental workers who clean up and keep all plants, flowers, shrubs and trees in top condition.

Certainly worth mentioning is the educational centre 't **Spei**, (a kind of weir originally) situated at the town's edge and enclosed by two old meanders of the Scheldt. The educative area comprises a 3 ha broad-leaved forest, an instructive path through the trees and shrubs, ponds, greens and tangled growth. Recently the total area of this green space was extended to 10 ha. Buying plots the town could

prevent building contractors laying claim on these grounds and in doing so preserved these valuable marshlands.

On the other side of the Scheldt, nearer to the town centre we find **Meerspoort** South, an area of 5 ha which also holds a meander from the Scheldt. Formerly, this arm of the Scheldt ran deep into the town centre.

Along the railway is yet another green zone: **Vestingen** (3 ha), a remnant of the old ramparts of great cultural and historical value.

In another part of the town, near Pamele, the town bought the garden of the former nunnery, **The Black Sisters Convent**; this is a second island of calm and greenery in town. **Cemeteries** have quite a similar function. Oudenaarde has 16 graveyards, forming together 20 ha. The graveyard of Volkegem was rebuilt (soil erosion was stopped and new plants and paths were set up) in a Leaderproject, for which a EFRO (European Fund for Regional Development) grant was obtained.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

The new sports centre has been completely renovated and the site transformed into a green neighbourhood for young and old; this site is part of the Masterplan of the left bank of the Scheldt. Even the parking lot is green: the rain works

its way through the paving stones, made of grass.

The Finish jogging track (1.4 km), the new indoor swimming pool Sport Oase and the new sports centre, Rode Los with its modern infrastructure and the newly laid out cycle paths, a skatepark, flowergrounds, lawns, ... will cer-

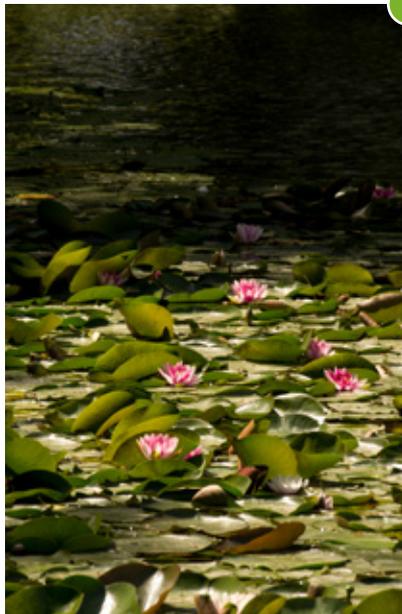
tainly intensify the perception of the green zone and make playing a sport even more attractive.

It is now a healthy meeting place for young an old, athletes, sports enthusiasts and even unathletic people.

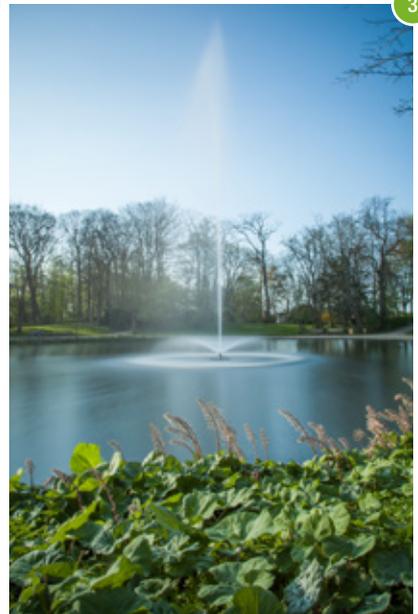
- 1. Sports and recreation sites`
- 2, 3 & 4. Liedtspark
- 5. Allotment gardens



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# PLANTING — PERMANENT / SEASONAL

Apart from the green elements belonging to the historical scenery, Oudenaarde can boast of a vast green area (130 ha), comprising 4800 trees, 3 ha of shrubs, 8 km of hedgerows, 48 ha of lawn and 1100 m<sup>2</sup> of roses, spread about in town and in the formerly independent municipalities. A dozen of local government employees, helped by workers from garden contractors look after trees, shrubs and flowers.

Last year 230 standard trees were planted; most of them were of local origin, but in town, foreign and preformed trees are chosen, because these trees can be pruned complementary to the architectural surrounding.

Every year Oudenaarde is transformed into a sea of colourful flowers.

Hundred of thousands daffodils greet the tourists in spring; 25.000 annual flowers are planted in flower towers (36) in flat flower containers (50), in flower tubs (460) and in the ground (725 m<sup>2</sup>). And every year a specific colour for these flowers is

chosen. In 1999 Oudenaarde was the first town using the Garsy-flower towers on the occasion of the first participation in Entente Florale Europe. The flower tubs (300 m long!) with the colour of *Pelargonium peltatum* along the banks of the Scheldt are equally surprising. Since 2015 the water of the Scheldt is used to water these flowers.

To minimize the cost of labour (by almost 50 %) by reducing the frequency and the volume of irrigation a hydro absorbing polymer is used; it was developed by Terra Cotte. This way no

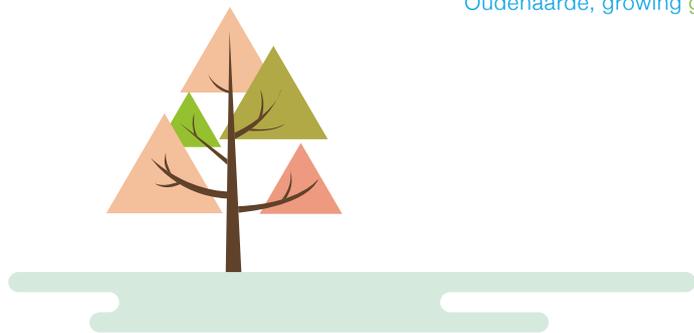
water is lost through evaporation or irrigation.

In order to counter the diminishing biodiversity and the **number of bees and bumblebees** hundreds of square metres have been sown with flowers; 6530 plants attractive to bees (*Geranium pratense*, *Knautia macedonia*, *Campanula grandiflora*, *Leucantheum vulgare*, *Silene dioica*, *Centaurea cyanus* and *Papaver dubium*) were planted.

Finally, techniques (fragmented swing mowing) to control roadside flora also help restore the biodiversity.







# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Building a green and climate friendly town where living is easy and cosy is not the task of the local government alone. All inhabitants, enterprises, schools and clubs must be involved, too.

## 't SPEI (an old word for some kind of weir), EDUCATIONAL CENTRE FOR NATURE

There are lots of primary schools in Oudenaarde and 2 large secondary schools.

Their pupils can enjoy **environmental and nature classes** in their hometown. 't Spei has a variety of biotopes, trees, shrubs and flowers. In 2018 during The Week of the Honeybee the 'Hall of Bees' was ceremoniously opened in the orchard of standard trees in 't Spei. The pupils of the Secondary Technical School had built a 'hotel' for solitary bees and other insects. 't Spei can be visited with a professional bee-keeper.

## HORTICULTURAL SCHOOL IN LIEDTS PARK

There is also a **horticultural school** in Oudenaarde; in the site of the allotment gardens the pupils can till the soil in some plots or they can cooperate with the municipal gardeners there. A 15.000 Euro grant was given for this **Leaderproject**.

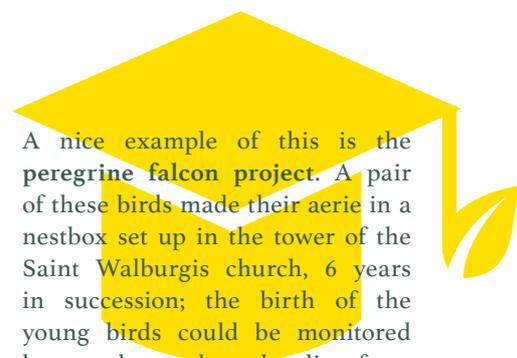
The town added the same amount of money which allowed them to build a small classroom near their workplace.

## REFUSE and LITTER

Pupils from primary and secondary schools also visit **the refuse containerpark**; the group can 'adopt' a specific road and clear away all litter, which results in a financial reward offered by the town's environmental office; there, schools can also borrow educational material. Schools or clubs, willing to work on the theme of waste control during a (school)year, are supported by a working group called Mooimakers (The Cleaners)

## TOWN and CITIZENS TOGETHER

Diverse organisations of private persons joining hands take an active part in the transformation of our system of living into a sustainable economy, with more respect for nature. They all work together to materialize plans.

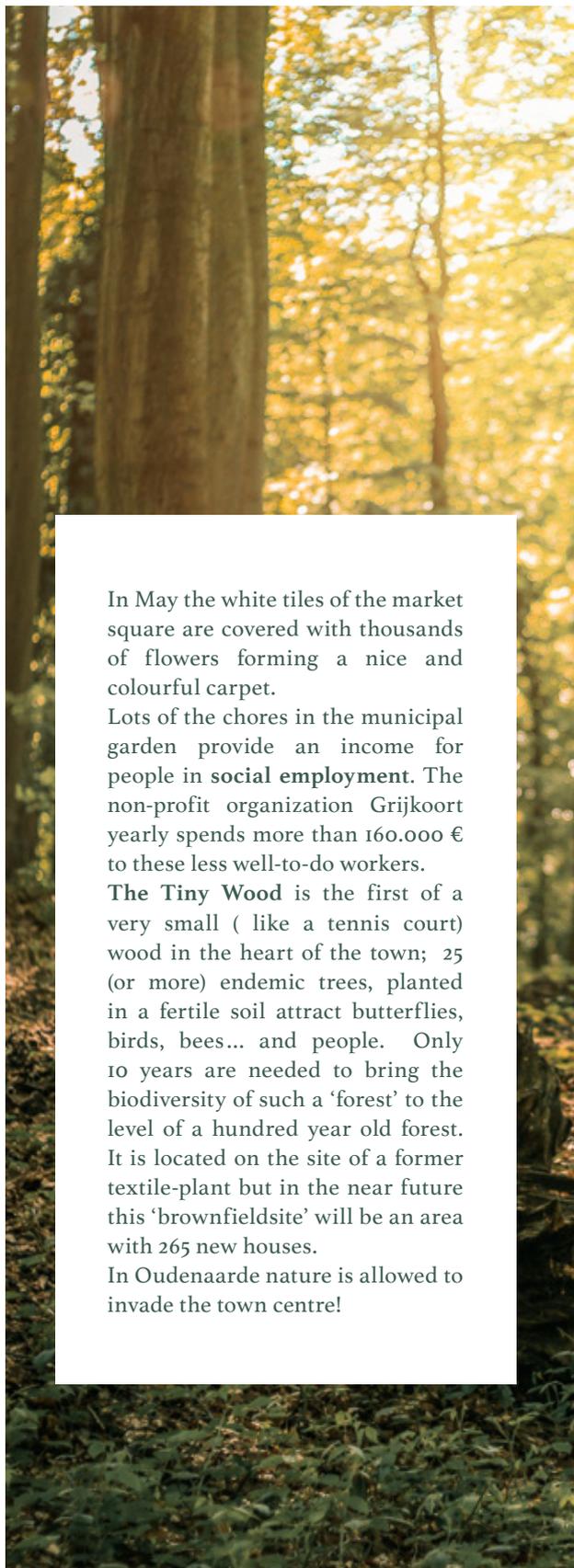


A nice example of this is the **peregrine falcon project**. A pair of these birds made their aerie in a nestbox set up in the tower of the Saint Walburgis church, 6 years in succession; the birth of the young birds could be monitored by a webcam, but also live from the marketplace during the day by binoculars. All citizen attending this moment received a 'baby drink' and could make suggestion for the name of the newly born stars of Oudenaarde.

## SMALLER EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

The archaeological site of Ename with the remnants of the underground walls of an abbey (beginning of the 17th century) still grows an **historical vegetable garden**, laid out as it had originally been planned.

Every Thursday morning on the market square there is a **flower and vegetable market**; once a year 25 renowned florists sell their young plants; the stallholder having the nicest stall is rewarded by the town.



In May the white tiles of the market square are covered with thousands of flowers forming a nice and colourful carpet.

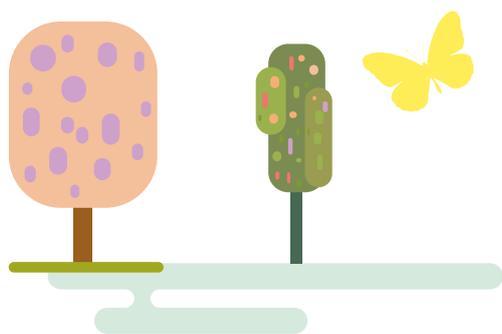
Lots of the chores in the municipal garden provide an income for people in **social employment**. The non-profit organization Grijskooft yearly spends more than 160.000 € to these less well-to-do workers.

**The Tiny Wood** is the first of a very small ( like a tennis court) wood in the heart of the town; 25 (or more) endemic trees, planted in a fertile soil attract butterflies, birds, bees... and people. Only 10 years are needed to bring the biodiversity of such a 'forest' to the level of a hundred year old forest. It is located on the site of a former textile-plant but in the near future this 'brownfieldsite' will be an area with 265 new houses.

In Oudenaarde nature is allowed to invade the town centre!



1. 'Hall of Bees'  
2. Weekly flower market



## EFFORT AND INVOLVEMENT

There are lots of organizations and societies in Oudenaarde with people committing themselves in theatre, sports, social-cultural clubs, in setting up activities for senior citizens, and ... for nature and the environment.

### 'T BOS 'T ENAME

The study group 't Bos 't Ename (Ename Wood) unites interested people living in the neighbourhood: some 300 members/families contribute to preserve and eventually to restore the old forest. In 2017 the '24 hours of Oudenaarde', a non-profit organisation that yearly organizes a 24 hour walk through Oudenaarde donated 10,000 € to 't Bos 't Ename because of its ecological and social importance; 2,000 people were willing to take part in this tiring event, making money for 't Bos 't Ename!

Every month members of the study group convene to plan a workday, organizing the maintenance of this exceptional forest of 62 ha; in winter chopping, felling and lopping is necessary; in summer making hay. Guided walks are frequently laid on through this area of natural beauty and through

the adjoining landscape, (together forming the core (185 ha) of 'Groen Hoofdstructuur Vlaanderen' (Green Main Structure Flanders). This forest is the subject of an exhaustive historical-ecological study of forests and wild areas in Flanders.

### HERITAGE DAYS

Every year Oudenaarde participates in the Heritage Days, organized throughout Belgium. That day Oudenaarde shows its (hidden) treasures to the public, free of charge. History, folklore, craft and trades, industry ... and natural scenery is subject matter of this day, attended to by thousands of people.

### SHOPPING TOWN OUDENAARDE

The non-profit organization Oudenaarde Winkelstad aims to

further commerce and mobility in the town centre in order to keep Oudenaarde a safe and attractive town. Last year it promoted coming to town by bike, leaving the car at home: shopkeepers rewarded customers who did so!

### PLOGGERS

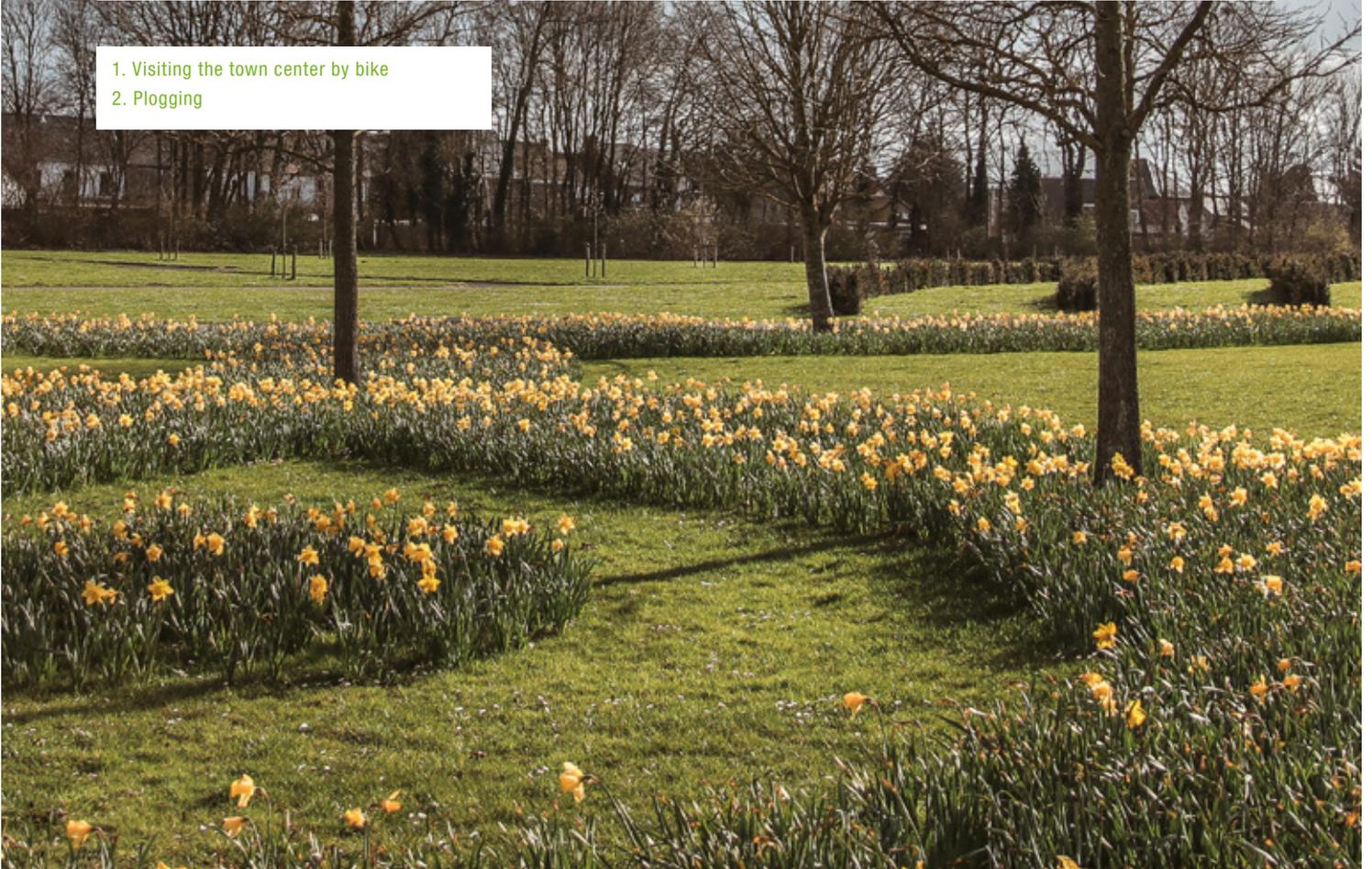
Unique in Flanders and typical of Oudenaarde is plogging: a group of ploggers pick up and gather litter while jogging. The word 'ploggen' is made from the Swedish 'plocka upp' (to pick up) and the English word 'jogging'. Every month people, young and old, run through the Oudenaarde territory and clean it up while jogging or walking.

A nice effort and proof of the involvement of the citizens of Oudenaarde in nature and ecology!





1. Visiting the town center by bike  
2. Plogging





# TOURISM AND LEISURE

## OUDENAARDE, TOWN WITH LOTS OF BENEFITS

The Citymarketplan clearly shows that the **historical-cultural heritage, cycling and beer** are the USPs (Unique Selling Propositions) or assets of Oudenaarde. This resulted in 3 tourist toppers: the MOU museum, the Tour of Flanders and the listing of the dark beer of Oudenaarde as a genuine Flemish product.

### MOU

MOU, Museum of Oudenaarde, is housed in the town hall and in the clothmakers' hall, that goes back to the 14th century; both buildings are evidence of the glorious past of the town.

**Tapestries and silver ware** were the two trades that made the history and the wealth of Oudenaarde. From the 15th to the 18th century tapestries were the most important export product of Flanders; the ones from Oudenaarde can now be found across Western Europe.

In the MOU fifteen of these large original tapestries are shown; the town has its own restoring workshop and a school teaching how these were woven in old handlooms.

In three rooms you can admire the silver ware, originally belonging to the family De Boever-Alligorièdes, one of the largest collection in Flanders.

Another exposition in Oudenaarde caught the eye of experts of paintings from the 16th century the world all over. In the autumn of 2018 the paintings of the Flemish painter **Adriaen Brouwer**, born in Oudenaarde, were brought to Oudenaarde from museums in Europe and the USA.

51.692 tourists and experts visited this unique **exhibition**.

### THE TOUR OF FLANDERS

Since 2012 the finishing line of this world famous cycle race is

in Oudenaarde. But this one day race for professionals is not the most important aspect, although ten thousand supporters dwell on the site of the Tour's finishing line and millions of people watch the cycle race on tv the world all over. The day before the official tour 14,000 amateur cyclists (60 % of which come from abroad) ride their own Tour of Flanders, making this the most important weekend for Oudenaarde. But almost every day, from spring to autumn groups of cycling fanatics ride their own Tour of Flanders.

Yet, it is much easier to experience the feeling of riding a cobbled track in the Museum of the Tour of Flanders (Centrum Ronde Van Vlaanderen, CRVV) or to watch a film proving the importance of this Tour for Oudenaarde and the Flemish Ardennes.

### URBAN DEVEVELOPMENT

Because these events attract large crowds the town supported the development of **The Ham quarter**, which made possible the building of the new Leopold Hotel, a boon for residential tourism.

The new town project **Scheldekop** aims to connect the town centre with the other interesting sites across the Scheldt, a. o. by building bridges for pedestrian and cyclists. Very modern and luxurious blocks of flats are constructed on the site, where streets and squares are named

after the twin towns of Oudenaarde (Coburg, Arras, Hastings, Castel Madamma, Bergen-op-Zoom)

Another site which is still in development is the **recreationpark at the Donk**, an old word for a knoll in marshlands. There, the town bought the former Kompas Camping site; in cooperation with building contractor **Roompot** in spring 2020 one hundred houses will be built in this holiday resort.

From spring to winter this recreationpark of 40 ha is the site of holiday camps organized by **The Outsider** for lots of youths. The pond with cable-lift for water skiing make this stay a thrilling and unforgettable but wet experience! The beach bar along the bank is an excellent place to recover...

There is a small **marina** in the arm of the river Scheldt, at only 250 metres from the market square! If you come to Oudenaarde across the water, moor your pleasure-boat there and walk to the market square. And have a glass of something quite typical of Oudenaarde.

### LOVELY OLD DARK BEER

Brewing **beer** in Oudenaarde started in the 12th century, possibly because the springwater in and around Oudenaarde was of excellent quality. In the 19th century Oudenaarde had become famous for its beer: the use of roasted and caramelized malt produces the special colour (dark brown) and

taste. Fifty years ago there were 8 breweries in Oudenaarde; now there are still 4 making beer according to traditional methods (although their tools are very modern): Roman, Liefmans, Cnudde and 't Smisje.

Oudenaarde was awarded the title of 'Ambassador of Flanders' Cockaigne' from 2012 to 2014 and in 2015 the dark beer of Oudenaarde, 'Old Oudenaards Bruin' was listed as a genuine Flemish product.

By now you have deserved a nice treat: take a seat on the pavement of one of the pubs around the market place, have a nice glass of the Old Dark Beer of Oudenaarde.

1. Tour of Flanders

2. Cyclists in front of Brewery Liefmans

3. Watersports at the Donk lake

4. Cycling in the Flemish Ardennes

5. Marina close to the city center

6. The Outsider near the Donk lake



1



2



3



4



5



6



# COMMUNICATION

To the town council of Oudenaarde, taking part in Entente Florale Europe is not merely the starting point but the support of the town-project to promote Oudenaarde as a green and nice city to live in. The slogan **Oudenaarde, groeiend groene stad** (growing green town) is to draw the inhabitants' attention to the miscellaneous possibilities and quality of all green areas in Oudenaarde..

As soon as the town's participation in *Entente Florale Europe* had officially been decided upon it was communicated to the local press by means of press releases and by a symbolical tree-planting act, the latter demonstrating the link with *Entente Florale Europe*.

Furthermore we want to focus the attention on the numerous efforts made by the local authorities concerning public green and sustainable environment. To this end, the paper "**Oudenaarde, groeiend groene stad**" (printed on recycled paper) was edited and distributed door-to-door to all inhabitants by bicycle couriers and also sent to the local press.

In addition to this, more information with visual material and background info about these different green and sustainable projects can be found on the municipal website. **Oudenaarde, groeiend groene stad** is furthermore elaborated upon in the municipal digital Newsletter, in the *Info Magazine*, in the town's newsletter in the local press and on various social media.

Ambassadors, such as *Milieufront Omer Wattez*, *Natuurpunt*, *Milieu-raad* (the town's environmental office) have been approached and

will disperse more information by their own networks.

But the message should also appear in the streetscape. For this, out-of-home channels were called in. The local council had the campaign logo put on their vehicles and this logo also appeared on the digital advertising boards.

To prepare the jury's visit, a promofilm was made showing the green and sustainable projects in Oudenaarde. This film was also posted on the municipal website and on social media.

Taken together, all these steps will surely create and confirm the town's image of a green and nice town to live in, proving that Oudenaarde is indeed a **groeiend groene stad** (growing green town).





