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A walk in the park, a step in the dark  
A walk in the park, a trip in the dark  
I'm getting away escaping today

A walk in the park  
Away from all the busy streets of my mind  
I seek a straighter path  
I seek a shady glade in which to unwind

0.34 – 1.09 Nick Straker Band (1979)







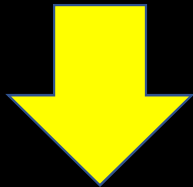
A park = escaping

A park = (re)creating

# A Walk in the Park

**Some numbers on obesity, video game addiction, burnouts, too little exercise**

- Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975. 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese.
- Young people (but also older people) are suffering more and more from burnouts
- Half of the young kids have too little exercise. 10% is video game addicted.



That's why parks are  
a necessity in the city







# Evaluating the planning proces in Molenwaterpark

Remarkable Identity/Merkwaardige Identiteit

dr. Gerard van Keken 6th November 2018



# “ReMarkable Identity”/Gerard van Keken

- Researcher/project-eventmanager /place branding  
Identities, place branding, tourism  
(rural, culinary), history
- Lecturer Netherlands/China
- Ph.d Erasmus University Rotterdam  
identity, place branding/ place making





# Content

1. Introduction
2. Central question + concepts
3. Research method
4. Results
5. Conclusions



Molenwaterpark 1800 (© Beeldbank Zeeuwse bibliotheek)

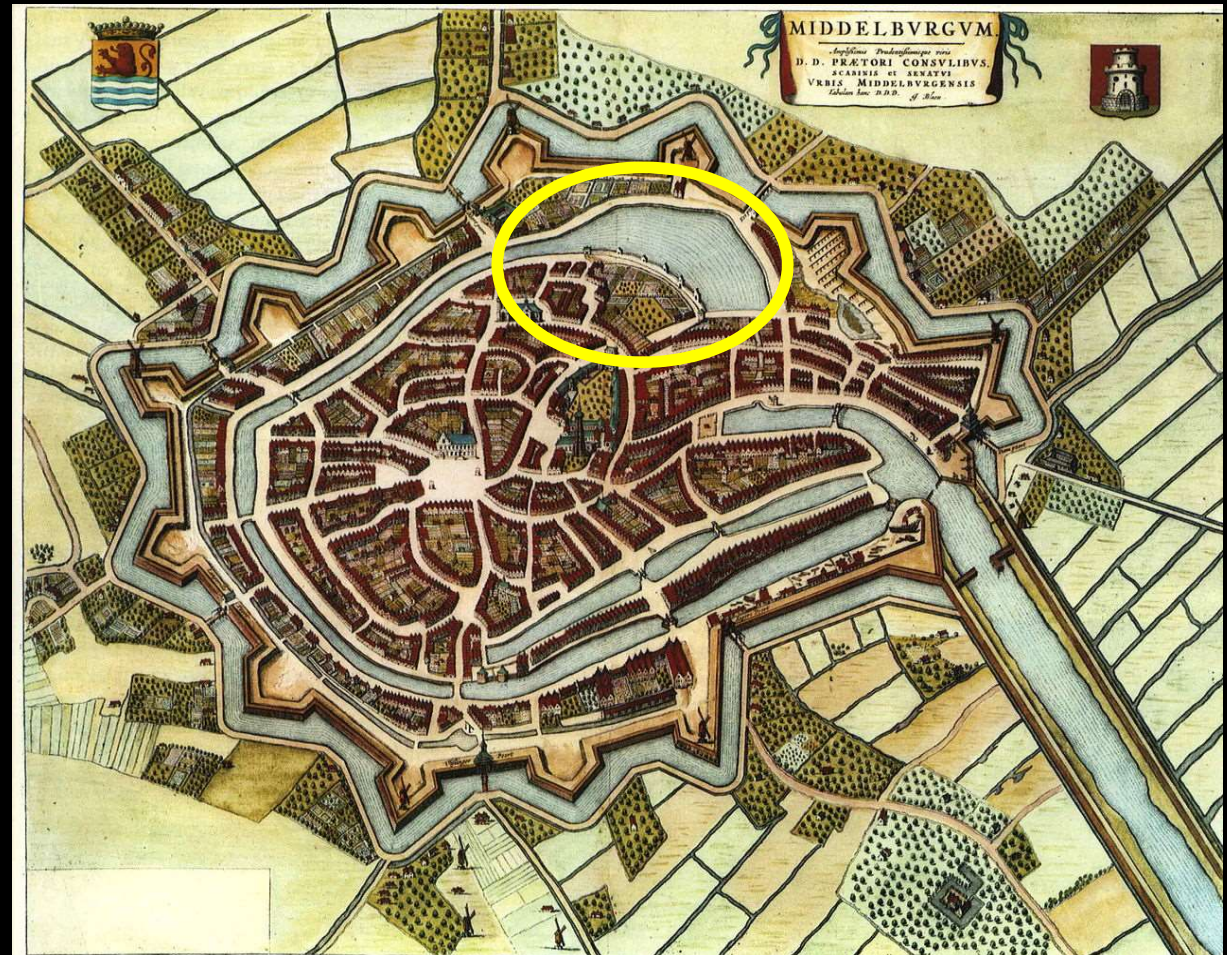


# 1. Intro: Molenwater (Millwater) → Molenwaterpark

Molenwater (14th century)  
→ functional: drainage of  
surplus water river Arne

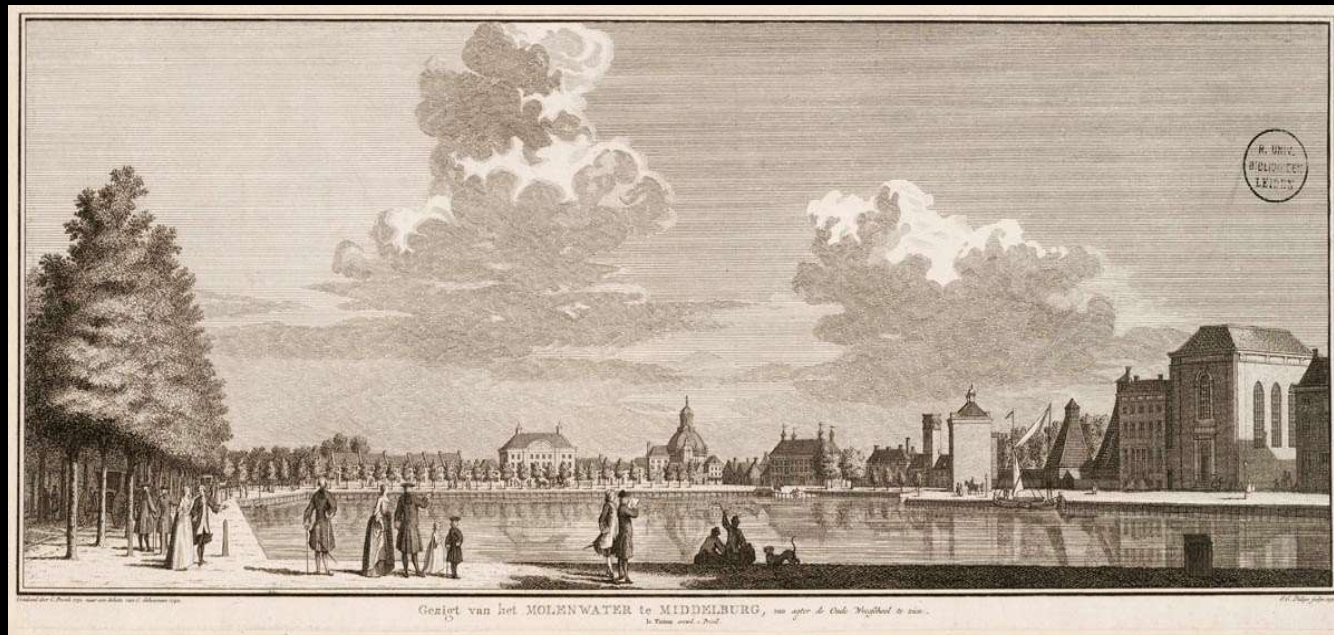
1595-1598: in the town  
Walls → tidal watermill

Blaeu 1652 →





# 1. Introduction: Molenwater → Molenwaterpark



From 1608 – 1777 several Deepings:  
still functional + RECREATIONAL

# 1. Introduction: Molenwater → Molenwaterpark

Several uses 1850-1950:  
Functional

- For the army: marching

Recreational

- For horses

- For events

- For cars expo





# 1. Introduction: Molenwater → Molenwaterpark

1954 -2008

Tourism purposes:

Attraction park

Miniatuur Walcheren



# 1. Introduction: Molenwater → Molenwaterpark

2008-2018

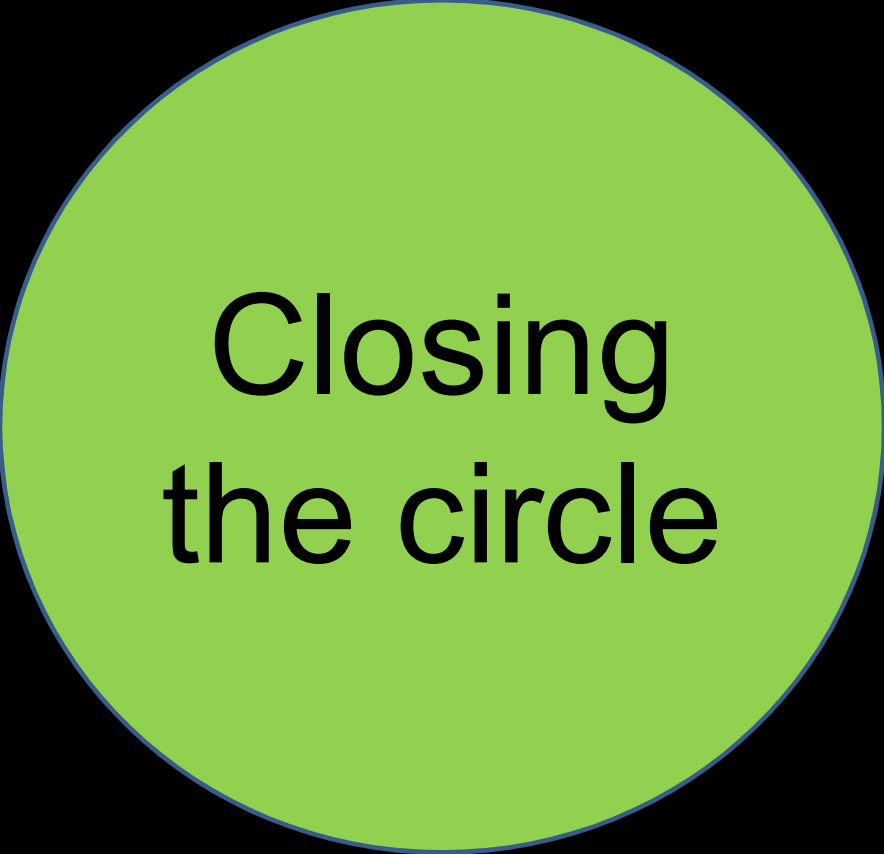
Undefined use: good for kids, for some residents and visitors uncertainty is unpleasant

15 years of Molenwater plan + city theatre plan making





# 1. Introduction: Molenwater → Molenwaterpark

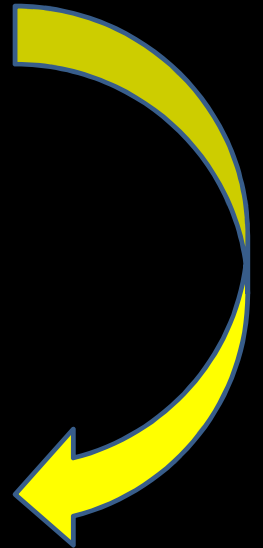


## Closing the circle

### Closing the circle

14th century:  
water reservoir,  
river de Arne & canals  
drainage of surplus water

2017-2018:  
waterresilient city  
climate change  
drainage of surplus water



## 2. Research question + concepts

### GOAL

- *Official: The Molenwaterpark is one of the projects from Water Resilient Cities which has the AIM to improve the adaptive capacity of cities to heavy rainfall by demonstrating how SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage) can be retrofitted in public areas normally constrained by existing uses and infrastructure (above or below ground), or 'historic environment' protection*
- In simple words; what can we make in the Molenwaterpark so that drainage of water surplus is possible? And how do we organise that?



## 2. Research question + concepts

**The central question is:**

to explore the nature, the progress  
and outcome of the stakeholder  
process and problem orientated  
design and

to put forward lessons that can be  
learned from the approach in  
Middelburg.

## 2. Research question + concepts

### Place and sense of place

Park is used

- By different age groups 0-99
  - For different activities: from cycling to strolling and playing
  - With different meanings: from 'escaping' to 'getting fit'
- 
- What are special characteristics of Molenwaterpark?
  - What is it's sense of place?



<http://tielse.nl> | ©Jean-Paul Opperman | foto nr. SC07524

## 2. Research question + concepts

### Place attachment

“is a set of feelings about a geographic location that *emotionally binds* a person to that place as a function of its role as a setting for experience



## 2. Research question + concepts

### The loyalty ladder

The loyalty ladder is a concept used in marketing which is applied here to residents and visitors in Molenwaterpark

How can you turn possible visitors of the park into ultimate brand ambassadors?



## 2. Research question + concepts

### Engagement with stakeholders

- Two way
- Interactive
- Providing information and seeking input
- Purpose driven
- Making meaningful connections
- Participation and building relations



## 2. Research question + concepts

What we used to do

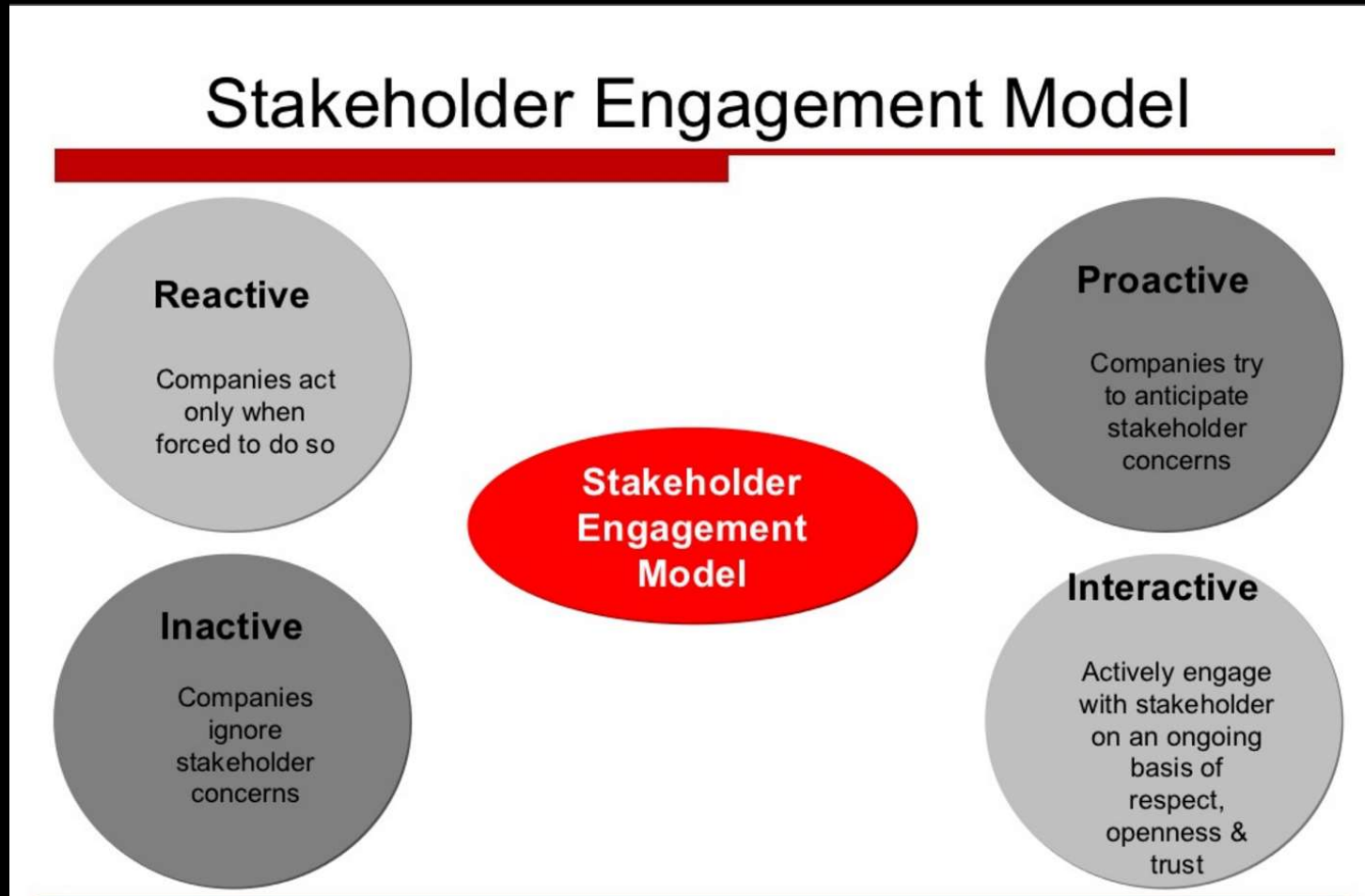
New media has drastically  
altered the way we  
communicate and engage

WE TALK,	THEY TALK,
THEY LISTEN	WE LISTEN

Doing things together is essential:  
a common agenda

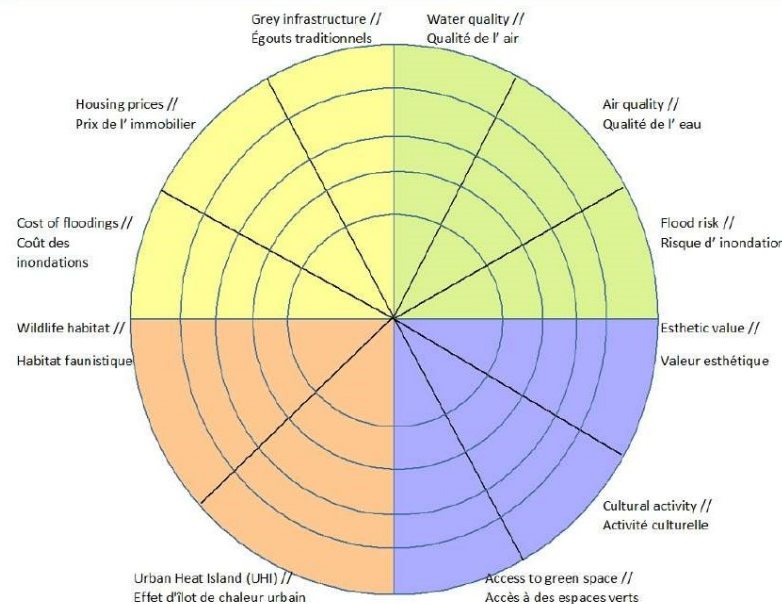


## 2. Research question + concepts



## 2. Research question + concepts

### Introduction



### DAISY WHEEL

- The daisy wheel is developed by VIVES to check improvements of the 'problem' situation by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- 11 parameters in 4 categories:
  - economical
  - ecological
  - cultural
  - environmental

### 3. Research method

#### Who is interviewed?

As many different stakeholders as possible:

- residents that live near the park,
- residents that lived one or two streets away from the park,
- a teacher
- businessmen/entrepreneurs who have their businesses/companies near the park,
- Involved stakeholders from the process.

Also several interviews were held with people in the park: users/visitors

15 interviews (duration 7-25 min.)





### 3. Research method

#### Who is interviewed?

- *Residents* 9
  - *Visitors* 12
  - *Work-related persons* 6
- Total* 27
- *Ages 14-65*
  - *Questionnaire: 14 open questions*



### 3. Research method



## 4. Results

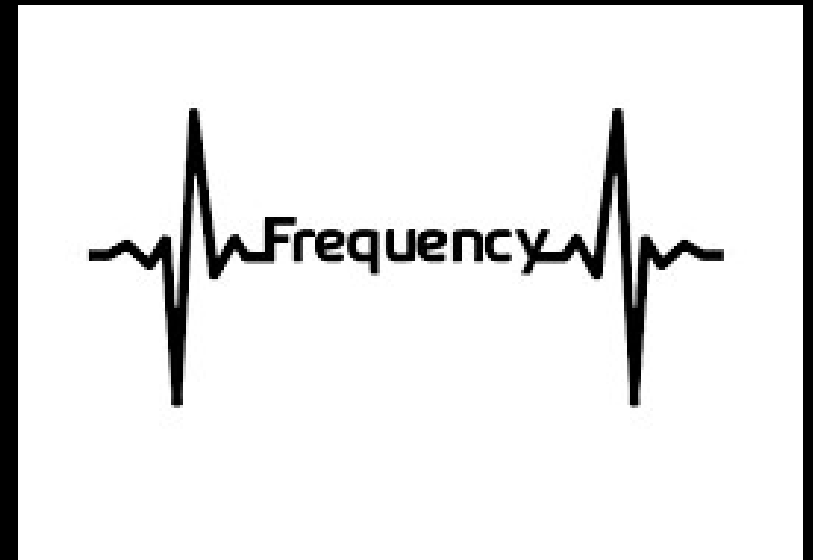
### REMARKABLE

Frequencies of visits

Range: from everyday to infrequent

Residents living close: rarely

Visitors (not residents) in the park:  
daily or once or twice a year





## 4. Results



### Personal value of the park

- The park as an open green space (4)
- A place to play and chill (4)
- Memory and nostalgia (3)
- Cultural-historical value (2)
- A negative qualification (2)

“the Molenwaterpark is the green open space from the inner city of Middelburg which has a huge potential, that has not been realised yet. It could be one of the nicest designs of a park that is created by people who have put energy in it”

## 4. Results



A negative qualification :the park gives a feeling of being at a cemetery

## 4. Results

### Value of the park at city level

- open and nice (5)
- green (4)
- great meaning and status (3)

*“I appreciate its openness and the connection with the surroundings, its history, its atmosphere”*





## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

8 interviewees feel strong or very strongly connected with the park

People feel connected to the park because they play(ed) there, live there, work with the park or because they are part of the advisory group

*“It is my direct living environment and of many other residents”*



© Facebook plan Molenwaterpark

## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

10 of the 15 interviewees know about the new plan for the park

Opinions on the plan:

- Good let it happen!
- 'it goes well with the context, there is a good basis so that the park will be adopted by the Middelburg population and can become a vibrant park



## 4. Results

Engagement, connectedness and participation

skeptical

“it looks good, but I am reluctant about the implementation”

“ more transparent, but very man made, not so natural”

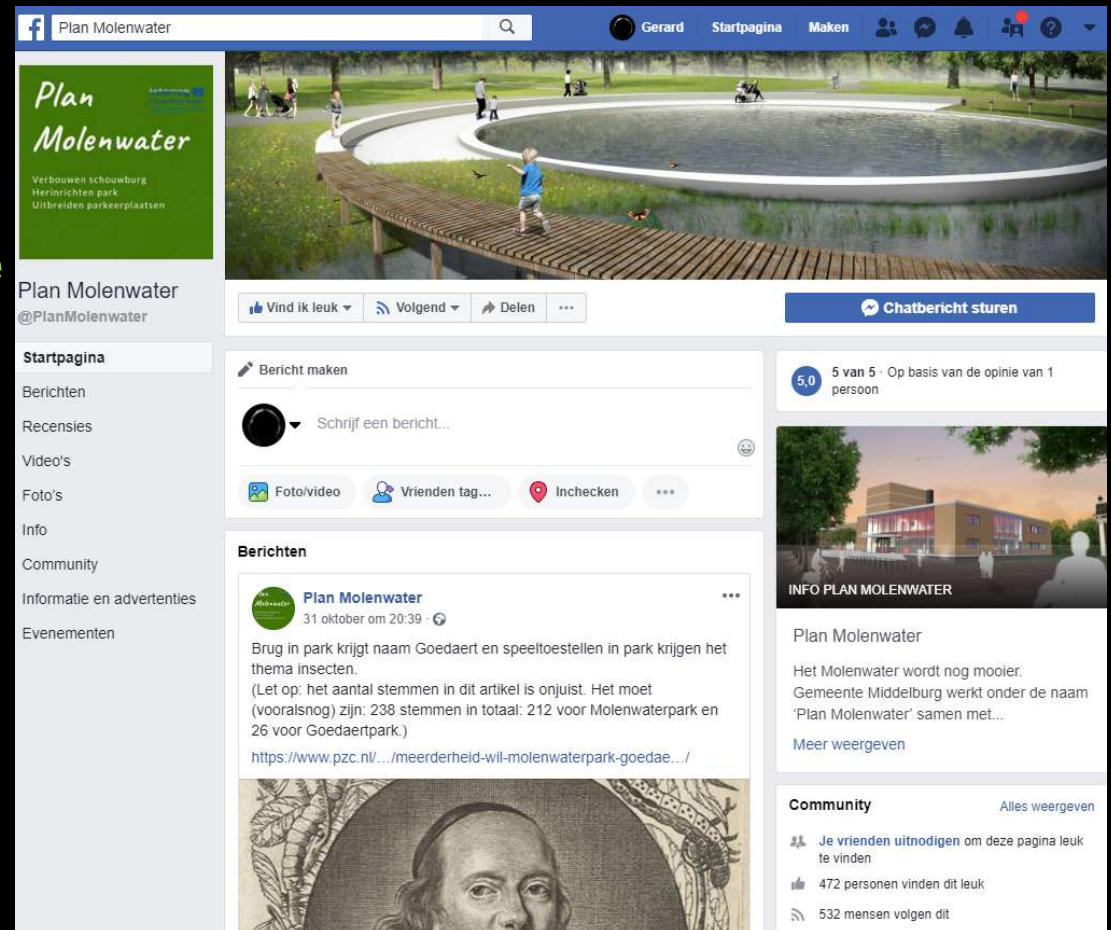




## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

An important way nowadays to raise awareness and engagement is social media like this facebook page on the plan Molenwater (nov 2016 – till now)



## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

Nine interviewees know about the plan process, six don't. Residents more than visitors.

Stakeholders positive or satisfied:

- “Unique because of the participation of the stakeholders and residents. The municipality has proposed to use everybody's input and that is processed by the municipality and the landscape architects”
- ‘I think this is the way to do it. In collaboration with, and in trust with each other, with the advisory group. I appreciated that”



© Facebook plan Molenwaterpark

## 4. Results

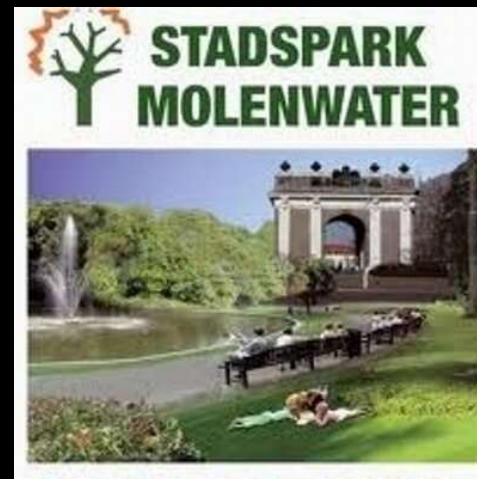
### Engagement, connectedness and participation

#### Observations of the process:

“You had to do it by involving residents. That happened with trial and error”.

“The municipality took over the process from the association ‘Stadspark Molenwaterpark’. Probably the aims were too high for them. From the moment the municipality took over, it went quickly”.

“It was well reasoned and I must say, that has been different. The municipality cooperated well, civil servants were really engaged. But as soon as politics come into play, I don’t have much trust in them”.



## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

Ideas & future roles:

- Panna cage/football field or playground
- Events or evening concerts
- A garden pavilion, terrace
- More colours, more flowers, more garbage cans, a fountain



## 4. Results

### Engagement, connectedness and participation

Looking at the roles people suggest, answers are:

- organizing events,
- helping with planting,
- sponsoring,
- the school could participate

“Continuation of the participation process is necessary. It doesn’t stop here. It starts here”.



CALL FOR  
Participation

## 4. Results



### Engagement, connectedness and participation

the most important role for the municipality:  
maintenance, maintenance, maintenance

“It doesn't have to be luxurious, but make sure that it will have class and cheap in maintenance”

“make sure that the municipality sees this as a part of the city.

That they will organize things, that they facilitate that residents want to organize events. That they will have a higher ambition, in the vision, in maintenance, in the project. That they will do things better than they usually do. Which might be difficult in financial tough times, but they are obligatory towards the residents”

# 5. Conclusions

## Planning for Molenwaterpark

- The period of uncertainty with plans for the park and the theatre has created scepticism.
- Residents, visitors and others don't care about projects. Most of them judge by what they see.
- The planning process with an advisory board is recommendable, but make sure that also users are involved!!



© Facebook plan Molenwaterpark



# 5. Conclusions



## Planning for Molenwaterpark

- The advisory board could or should have had more users from different ages, sexes and especially interests, asking them for their desires and needs. Or there should have been done more research on users in the park.
- Place attachment is not just restricted to residents!

# 5. Conclusions

## Planning for Molenwaterpark

Still, consulting residents, businesses, the theatre, the nature group and putting them in advisory board to share their thoughts, to hear their ideas and criticism, is a very valuable approach of inclusion

Continuing the participation process is necessary.



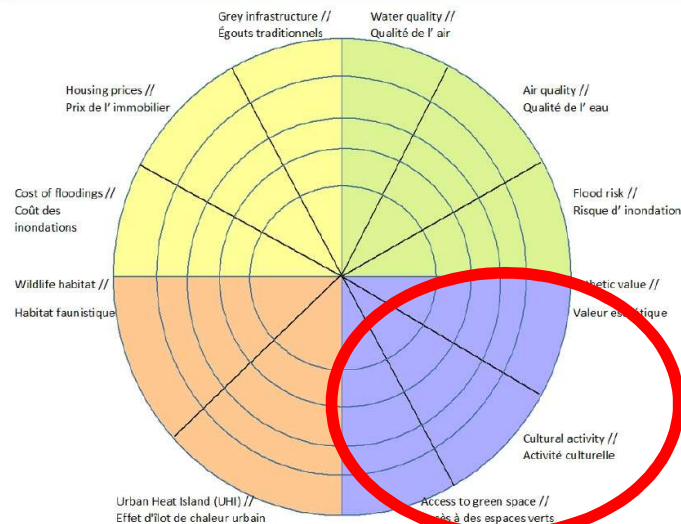
# 5. Conclusions

## DAISY WHEEL

The Daisy Wheel is an instrument that is probably useful for researchers and policy makers,

For analyzing the daily world of residents and visitors it is less usefull. Most of their (added) values are situated in the culturul category

### Introduction





# 5. Conclusions

## The loyalty ladder and trust

- Important is that the right people are encouraged to organize events in the park, supported by the municipality and also the theatre and businesses in the neighbourhood. Regular events are essential to create vividness in the park and creating ambassadors.

# 5. Conclusions

## The loyalty ladder and trust

- The municipality (and others) should not organize things from the desk, but also on the spot.
- Participation is not a goal in itself, but still a certain way of citizen participation is required where sharing and exchanging views and ideas could help a public place. Continuation is necessary.

Thank you for your attention



Closing Chord