



Partij van de Zuinigheid

Election program 'Zuinig op Groningen'

PREFACE

Extinguished 19th century ideologies

The old 19th century ideologies do not offer solutions to the problems we face in the 21st century: coronavirus crisis, biodiversity crisis, nitrogen crisis, debt crisis, housing crisis, healthcare crisis, education crisis, migration crisis, plastic crisis – it is crisis everywhere, the old major political parties are (almost all) imploded and we see the emergence of many single-issue parties without vision. The Partij van de Zuinigheid (PvdZ) wants to break through the associated despondency and hopelessness with a new vision that is separate from the old ideologies and the associated left-right division.

We consider ourselves fortunate to translate our ideas to the local level for the first time in the local elections in March 2022 and to present them to the people of Groningen. Our ideal is to always be recognizable as being careful with nature, with our culture and on the invoice, apart from who might be the party leader at a particular moment.

Economical with nature, our culture and on the invoice

Frugal with nature because everything starts there and our lives are inextricably linked to it. You can see her as the greatest gift we have received as humanity. All the more reason to be super careful with the often spectacularly beautiful life forms and with clean air, clean water and clean earth that are the basic conditions for life and our health.

In addition, we have inherited from our ancestors a system of values and norms with associated institutions such as the democratic constitutional state, equality before the law and with free citizens, in addition to beautiful art, villages and cities that make life so much more beautiful and that we must use sparingly (all the more so because we are already busy enough with the transition we need to go through to improve our relationship with nature).

Finally, we will also have to be frugal with finances. Politics is about the distribution of scarce resources, in which choices are inevitable. Not everything is possible and certainly not at the same time. Future generations should be burdened with as little debt as possible, because new problems such as the present one with the coronavirus are always lurking and it would be irresponsible to unload on new generations not only all kinds of crises, but also huge financial debts. Based on the

idea that the difference between money and energy is minimal, concerns about climate change also support the idea that politicians should be frugal with the money raised by taxpayers.

We can always be held accountable for these principles. We have translated them for the municipal elections in our election program 'Zuinig op Groningen'. Because circumstances change constantly, and also to keep it legible, we generally limit ourselves to outlines - occasionally clarified with a topical point.

NATURE

Green

In the city of Groningen, with the town of Haren that has grown almost attached to it, the PvdZ cherishes the greenery and, more specifically, the trees that mean so much to our well-being, clean air, biodiversity, climate adaptation and cooling. It would be a great improvement if this were taken into account at the start of the planning for all kinds of projects and not until much later in the process, as is now the case. A change of mentality at the RO/EZ Department, Building and Housing Directorate, could also be very helpful in this regard.

Animal welfare

Many people have pets that they take good care of and sometimes even see as part of the family. They often do not know what happens to the animals in livestock farming and to laboratory animals, and they often prefer not to know. The PvdZ is committed to improving their lot and is advocating first of all that the municipality no longer serves meat from pigs that are cooked alive in its own business operations. Fireworks should also be banned from an animal welfare point of view.

Energy

Our energy supply will have to change. With all the adjustments that have to take place in a small and densely populated area like the Netherlands, a kind of city-state with fortunately still a lot of nature, it is a matter of looking for the best balance. Windmills are not the first choice for the PvdZ. Not only do they damage health and ruin the landscape, they are also disastrous for biodiversity due to the large numbers of insects, bats and birds (including the sea eagle!) that they knock out of the air. The province of Groningen has already suffered enough from energy production and will have to do its part with energy savings, use of residual heat, solar energy, hydrogen and the smaller EAZ windmills of about 15 meters high.

Air quality and traffic

Trees are not a fuel, not in biomass plants and at home in a wood stove only if the emissions do not harm health. In addition, traffic causes a lot of emissions, fortunately less and less. Two-stroke mopeds and stink diesels are demonstrably bad for health and certainly do not belong on public roads in an urban environment. The PvdZ would like to encourage modes of transport that cause as little nuisance and health damage as possible, such as walking, cycling and electric transport. The municipality should sign the Clean Air Agreement to ensure a continuous commitment to better air quality.

Waste

As nice as it is that more and more residents keep their streets clean, a little more effort from the

municipality is in order here. In order to prevent even more litter, taxing the return of raw materials (the so-called diftar-system) is not a good idea. On the other hand, fining the dumping of waste more often is an excellent idea.

OUR CULTURE

More democracy and taking participation seriously

At the local level, the possibilities are limited to strengthen the system of values and norms built up by trial and error by previous generations - with associated institutions such as the democratic constitutional state, equality before the law and free citizens. But where possible, the opportunities must be seized. We generally have well-educated citizens who should be allowed to be heard more than once every four years. The PvdZ is therefore in favor of all kinds of citizen consultations.

Unfortunately, we see that the current council of B&W is also talking about this, but when it comes down to it, time and again opts for a policy of fait accomplis. Whether it concerns Skaeve Huse (Danish for 'weird houses', houses at a considerable distance from ordinary houses intended for people who cause serious nuisance in the area), the height of the Gerrit Krolbrug, the trotting track in the Stadspark, the felling of trees in Selwerd or the plans for the Oosterhamrik zone – the participation always turns out to be a farce. The residents involved were no more heard than the residents of Haren in a previous term of office. Unfortunately, the population is also not heard when appointing the mayor. The PvdZ is in favor of a directly elected mayor.

Haren

For centuries, the people of Haren have been so well self-governed that it was considered the green pearl of the North where it was good to live. For years it has been elected in the top 3 of best residential municipalities in the country. The inhabitants have repeatedly indicated to a large extent that they want to continue as an independent municipality and that they do not want to be swallowed up by its large neighbor Groningen. Caught in the tunnel vision of upscaling (which all too often does not yield the anticipated efficiency gains) and population growth, the Province, the Municipality of Groningen and highly paid consultants have managed to merge the Municipality of Haren with Groningen and Ten Boer. As far as the PvdZ is concerned, we will do everything we can to give the green pearl back to the residents. To start with, we think it would be a good idea to hold a referendum about this among the inhabitants of the former municipality. The closer to the people, the stronger the democracy.

Housing

As far as the PvdZ is concerned, the steady growth of the population in Groningen should be a bit less. The liveability of the city of Groningen in particular is already under enough pressure. Pressure that we would rather see on the board of the University of Groningen with its profit-driven desire for more and more foreign students, without further worrying about the pressure on the housing market. Concentrated student housing on a campus could ease that pressure somewhat. Although the PvdZ considers the free market economy superior to state planning, the completely out of control housing market in particular requires firm government intervention, for example a self-occupancy obligation to counter speculation. Stimulating cohabitation and collective housing can also be part of the solution.

Groningen - Hanseatic City

As an old Hanseatic city Groningen still has a pretty whole medieval street pattern and beautiful architecture, even though this is gradually decreasing and the Second World War in particular left a big hole in the center. The fact that the population has a strong preference for old, monumental inner cities is not only apparent from house prices, housing preferences and the visitor numbers of tourists, but was once again evident in 1991 when more than 80% of the townspeople opted for the historicizing Waagstraat design. In 2007 the public survey about the Forum only offered modernist variants. As far as the PvdZ is concerned, that was once and never again and we cherish the old Hanseatic heart of Groningen.

Racism and Discrimination

The PvdZ naturally attaches great importance to equality before the law, one of the greatest achievements of free Western society. Racism and discrimination are prohibited. The PvdZ hereby draws special attention to the Jews, the population group that has suffered like no other for centuries from deprivation and persecution, whether it was religiously or racially motivated. Let's be careful with the few Jews who survived and stayed or came to live in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, anti-Semitism is on the rise. In fact, it is so bad that for their own safety, Jews are advised not to walk the streets recognizable as Jews. The PvdZ proposes an annual 'yarmulke day' for all councilors with which they can - on a voluntary basis - express their solidarity with the Jewish minority and perhaps keep a finger on the pulse to determine the state of antisemitism in Groningen.

Sports and culture

Sport and culture are extremely important for well-being. The PvdZ supports both and will do its utmost to maintain the infrastructure (sports fields, swimming pools, accommodations, theaters and stages) and keep it affordable. These are facilities that are important for health as well as for meeting and bonding. The PvdZ opts for proper maintenance of the infrastructure instead of major investments at the expense of recreational sports and smaller-scale cultural facilities.

INVOICE

No increase in taxes in the next four years

Year in, year out, the Municipality of Groningen spends less than budgeted (a budget of approximately one billion euros). The parties then tumble over each other to ask the Municipal Executive to budget less economically. The PvdZ's first choice would be to see whether the rates that residents and businesses have to pay cannot be lowered. As far as the PvdZ is concerned, there is no room for an increase in municipal rates and taxes in the next four years. Often it is questionable how useful it is the way money is spent. For example, you may think that it is sustainable to build a new sports or cultural center such as Kardinge or De Oosterpoort every thirty or forty years, but you could also invest more in maintenance or even better put up a building that can accommodate at least a hundred years. Another (small) example of how it can be more economical: the Municipal Executive can of course do without its own official car.

The economy

A healthy business community is indispensable for a healthy economy. The most important economic sector is small and medium-sized enterprises. Like most parties, the PvdZ has a warm heart for this

sector and we hope to have something to offer them by putting a brake on municipal taxes and rates. But we also ask something of them, namely that they use energy and raw materials economically and that they participate in the necessary transition to a circular economy in which work is done with respect for nature and the emission of harmful chemicals into the ground, water and air is minimized.