

NIEUWPOORT – BELGIUM (Category A: population 11.267)

The town of Nieuwpoort lies on the IJzer, 3km (2miles) from where it flows into the North Sea. It is divided into Nieuwpoort Bad and Nieuwpoort Stad laying a little further inland, and is an important fishing port. The importance of tourism, which is in first place concentrated in Nieuwpoort Bad, can be seen from the extensive yacht harbour, one of the largest in the North Sea.



History

In the past, Nieuwpoort was almost exclusively a fishing port and was during certain period's one of the most important ones of the Belgian coast. At the end of the 16th century Nieuwpoort was a famous or even notorious Spanish pirate nest. The town situated at the North Sea was the first front city on Belgian soil. It was above all a battlefield for four nations and this historical fact, together with the important facts like the flooding, makes the role of Nieuwpoort during the Great War unique.

Enhancement of the Landscape

Nieuwpoort is surrounded by an open polder area in which agriculture, water and nature play a key role. Characteristics of the open polder area are the waterways, the channels and the moats with their magnificent views. The combination of coast, dunes and polder biotopes offers ample variation of environmental types. Our policy for intact landscapes or natural and cultural-historical heritage focuses on the preservation and the strengthening of the traditional features and the characteristic relics.

Heritage

Documents from 1494 indicate the existence of giants in the town. The most famous giant, Jan Turpin II is 10.60 m and weighs 760 kg and is the biggest giant to be carried in Europe.

The tragic death of Jeanne Panne, who was accused of witchcraft and burned alive at the stake, gave Nieuwpoort the nickname of Witch city. During these days, the historic town centre is going back in time, more specifically, to the year 1603.

Environmentally sensitive practices

Our fishermen prove on a daily basis that alternative and durable fishing methods work and are also economically valuable. The town is partner and promotes this form of local fishery by the label "Durable Fish from Nieuwpoort".

Local farmers specialize in hemp fibre cultivation, rapeseed for bio fuel or flax cultivation instead of large-scale agriculture. Methane gas is used as energy source.

Our parks are being managed according to the principles of harmonious park and vegetation management. This means that the design and the management focus on durability, dynamics and diversity in the area of nature, environment, organisation and people.

Community sustainability

Nieuwpoort has 11 advisory boards and 7 village or neighbouring councils that represent our 11.000 inhabitants. These are all elected and have an important advisory and guiding task.

Healthy lifestyles

There are 131 working socio-cultural societies and 56 active sport clubs, although we have only 11.000 inhabitants! For all these societies and sport clubs there is an excellent infrastructure and volunteers organise several events in cooperation with the city services.

The offer of water-recreation infrastructure is very good and unique, and the ample trainings like sailing, surfing and kite surfing are well loved.



Planning for the future

With the fastest growing tourist population at the Belgian Coast, over 100.000 visits during busy weekends and a thriving entrepreneurial talent we face huge challenges; but amidst the complexity of our historical town, harbour and coastal tourist centre, we have one unifying vision: Green Pride!