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Climate and environment

The Bocholt Sustainability Award goes to NABU

NABU Bocholt Group takes first place // Wildwiese nursery and PLAAN•B also receive awards // Special prize for "GEMeinsam Heilignachmittag" // Keynote speech by Thomas Ranft

The Bocholt group of the NABU Borken district association has won the Bocholt Sustainability Award 2026. In second and third place were the Wildwiese nursery and the second-hand and pop-up shop PLAAN•B. The jury also awarded a special prize to the project "GEMeinsam Heilignachmittag".

Around 80 guests attended the awards ceremony at Westphalian University of Applied Sciences on Friday 9 October. The city of Bocholt presented the Sustainability Award for the second time, following its inaugural presentation in 2024. Thirteen projects had been submitted. The surprise at receiving the award was clearly evident among all the winners. The prize money continues to be sponsored by stadtwerker. Once again, a jury comprising representatives from politics, the civil service, academia, the media and the main sponsor decided on the winners.

First place - and with it 5,000 euros - went to the NABU Bocholt group for its project "Bocholt's Aasee & Hohenhorster Berge: Sustainable Protection and Enhancement for Bocholt". In doing so, the jury also recognised the group's long-standing commitment to making Bocholt a more sustainable and better place, step by step. Michael Wiesmann, who presented the award, emphasised that environmental protection strengthens the town's image and is a locational advantage for both people and businesses. With the "Blue Classroom", the group aims to make greater use of the Aasee for environmental education in future. As a lasting symbol of the award, a native tree will be planted by the Aasee next year in collaboration with NABU.

The second prize, worth 2,500 euros, goes to the Wildwiese nursery, run by the 'Jugend & soziale Arbeit' association. Under the title "Experiencing Sustainability", the nursery is collaborating with Sakina Döing's Naturhof Bocholt, which had also applied for the prize. The focus is on social environmental education, in which children gain first-hand experience of nature and sustainability. The laudatory speech was given by Elke Cappell-Knorr.

The jury awarded third place and 1,000 euros to PLAA•B. The presenter, Michael Jansen, visibly surprised the prize-winners with his words of praise. The sisters Romy, Ninja and Gina Wenningmann founded the second-hand and pop-up shop and run it together, as they describe it, "with a heart from Bocholt and in the heart of Bocholt".

Jürgen Elmer, managing director of stadtwerker and sponsor of the sustainability award, delivered a special laudatory speech. This year, in addition to the three main prizes, the jury announced a special prize of 1,000 euros, which was donated by the sponsor. It goes to the project "GEMeinsam Heilighnachmittag - The smart revolution against silence", a social venture project in cooperation with the city of Bocholt. With this special prize, the jury aims to support the project's further development.

The keynote speech of the evening was delivered by science journalist and TV presenter Thomas Ranft, entitled "Sustainability as a gain, because moaning isn't a solution either". Ranft advocated a mindful approach to oneself and the environment. The current state of the world can certainly dampen one's spirits, he said, but it is precisely from this that energy for new endeavours can be drawn. Fear is not a good guide, he added, as crises have time and again

given rise to developments that have subsequently made life better or easier. As an example, he cited the invention of the bicycle, which stemmed from a famine and the resulting shortage of horses. Ranft illustrated his appeal - that everyone can make a contribution - with the image of an ant: it clears a twig from its path without realising that, in doing so, it is also clearing the forest.



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