

16. October 2026

Education and culture

Candles for the deceased in the city woods

Light display on Sunday 1 November, from 4.30 pm // Joint event organised by VHS, Dr Benedikt Matenaer and the Friends of the Palliative Care Unit // Floating lights on the former Flamingo Pond // Free admission

Palliative care specialist Dr Benedikt Matenaer and the Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg Adult Education Centre are jointly organising a candlelit vigil in the Stadtwald on Sunday, 1 November 2026. From 4.30 pm, small lights will be set afloat on the former Flamingo Pond. All residents who wish to commemorate their loved ones who have passed away are invited to attend.

The lantern ceremony begins on Sunday, 1 November, at 4.30 pm by the former Flamingo Pond in Bocholt's Stadtwald, opposite the goat enclosure. Participants will place small lanterns on the water. Each light represents a person who has passed away and left their mark on the lives of their loved ones and friends. Short reflections, soft music and moments of silence accompany the commemoration. The event provides space for personal thoughts as well as for shared remembrance.

"Grief needs space. Memories need a place where they are allowed to be. Lighting a candle can be a very simple, yet at the same time very personal, expression of love, gratitude and connection", says Dr Matenaer. "With this candle-lighting event, we want to create a safe space where people can remember, pause and pay tribute to their loved ones together."

The initiative is supported by the Friends' Association of the Palliative Care Unit at St Agnes Hospital in Bocholt. The partners are thus continuing their collaboration from last year: in November, the VHS brought together numerous people grappling with grief and death through the event series "Between New Beginnings and Farewells". The series was inspired by examples from the neighbouring Netherlands. With this candlelight event, the VHS and Dr Matenaer are now building on this initiative.

"The response to our series last year showed just how great the need is to talk openly about death and grief. We are building on this together", explains Bocholt's Deputy Mayor Björn Volmering, "Adult education also means creating spaces for topics that affect everyone. Farewells and remembrance are part of that." Everyone who feels this applies to them is invited, regardless of age, religious affiliation or life circumstances.

Participation is free of charge. You can register at the Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg Adult Education Centre, or online at vhs.bocholt.de. In the event of bad weather, the light display will take place in a modified form.

Dr Benedikt Matenaer is a specialist in anaesthesia, a pain therapist specialising in cancer-related pain, and a palliative care physician. He works in the palliative care unit at St Agnes Hospital and heads the outpatient palliative care service in Bocholt. He has played a key role in establishing both of these services.



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A moment of silent remembrance in Bocholt's municipal woodland