

14. December 2022

Social

## **New meeting place in the cemetery district coming next summer**

### **City of Bocholt, "Leben im Alter" association, housing company and foundation sign cooperation agreement to strengthen the neighborhood**

The residents in Bocholt's Friedhofsviertel district already have something to look forward to: Next summer, the new citizens' meeting place at the corner of Breslauer Straße 2, in the former Melis beverage store, is scheduled to open. Until then, the rooms will be renovated and furnished. The name of the meeting place has not yet been decided. A name competition is to take place.

Representatives of the city of Bocholt, the "Leben im Alter" (LiA) association, the housing companies Bocholter Heimbau e.G. and LEG Immobilien, and the LEG foundation "Dein Zuhause hilft" (Your Home Helps) have now signed an agreement in which the parties involved commit themselves to further promoting development in the Friedhof neighborhood. The central element is the future neighborhood meeting place. The renovation and fitting-out will cost around 125,000 euros, which will be covered by LEG Immobilien and the city of Bocholt. Once it opens, the center will offer a variety of social and counseling services to all residents.

### **Background: Neighborhood work in Bocholt**

For a number of years now, Bocholt's neighborhoods and residential quarters have been receiving targeted support, for example in the Friedhofsviertel, "Hochfeld" and "Fildeken". The aim is to strengthen neighborhood cohesion, enable integration and activate voluntary commitment. "Housing is the new social issue: It's about more than just housing itself. It's about the environment and good structures," says Mayor Thomas Kerkhoff, who cites Cologne as a comparison: "There, they say 'Veedel' (note: Cologne dialect for 'neighborhood') - and that's a school of thought there." In Bocholt, too, neighborhood work is being "driven forward with great visionary force." The Quartierstreff receives "a high symbolism," said Kerkhoff, who thanked all those involved in the cooperation agreement for their commitment.

LiA Chairwoman Andrea Unland recalled the beginnings in the cemetery district in 2006, when LiA opened a drop-in center on Dortmunder Straße that was primarily intended for senior citizens. Over the years, that has changed. In the meantime, different generations live and work in the cemetery district. Since 2021, LiA has therefore expanded its focus to include all groups and generations living there.

Cooperation with the housing companies Bocholter Heimbau and LEG, which are active in the neighborhood, has been standard practice for almost 10 years. For some time now, the LEG foundation has been supporting "Dein Zuhause hilft" as a new partner. The city administration is also on board via the social services department. Everyone agrees that the good cooperation is to be continued on the basis of the contractual agreement that has now been concluded.

The first successes have already been achieved. A few days ago, almost 100 people attended the Advent caroling. Many other activities are planned for the future, such as walking and strolling meetings, creative afternoons and more.

The central meeting place on Breslauer Straße is the ideal location for this. It will open its doors in the summer of 2023. There is great anticipation in the neighborhood.





*Gemeinsam für ein starkes Friedhofsviertel (v.l.n.r.): Thomas Waschki (Erster Stadtrat Stadt Bocholt), Agnes Wellkamp, Andrea Unland (beide "Leben im Alter" e.V.), Bitta Winkeler (Bocholter Heimbau e.G.), Christa Mencil (LEG Immobilien), MElanie Anhalt (Stiftung "Dein Zuhause hilft"), Dr. Volker Wiegel (LEG Immobilien) und Bürgermeister Thomas Kerkhoff freuen sich mit Peter Hardeweg (sitzend, Bocholter Heimbau e.G.) über die gemeinsame Vertragsunterzeichnung.*

*© Stadt Bocholt*