

**THINK
EUROPEAN.
ACT
LOCAL..**

Election Program Volt Eemsdelta
Municipal Elections 2026



Foreword

Dear residents of Eemsdelta,

Eemsdelta is facing major challenges. And let's be honest: we will not solve them with yesterday's ideas. Sticking to outdated approaches keeps problems in place and holds our community back. That is why a change of course is needed. Eemsdelta needs new politics, with the courage to make real choices and the guts to follow through. Volt brings fresh ideas and the determination to implement them. We dare to make the choices that are necessary for the Eemsdelta of the future.

We envision a vibrant Eemsdelta where everyone feels at home. A municipality with affordable housing for all, an end to poverty, and public transport that will get you anywhere. Progress is possible when we choose connection over division. Progress is possible when we work together.

Volt believes that we can only move forward through cooperation: in Eemsdelta, in Groningen, in the Netherlands and in Europe. Europe is made up of local communities like ours. Eemsdelta may lie in the far north of the Netherlands, but within our European region, the Eems Dollart area, it occupies a relatively central position. Our neighbours across the border are close, and cooperation brings shared knowledge and opportunities. Volt is also a pan-European movement. This allows us to bring good ideas from across Europe to Eemsdelta and to share our successes with others. European cooperation strengthens Eemsdelta, and Eemsdelta strengthens Europe.

Eemsdelta is home to people with different backgrounds, languages and perspectives. Everyone who lives, works or studies here is part of our community and should be able to participate fully. An inclusive municipality means that barriers to participation are removed and that involvement in community life and local democracy is accessible to all.

At the same time, we know that many people feel they are not taken seriously by politicians, and we understand that frustration. Genuinely listening to residents is not easy; it requires time, attention and commitment, and that is exactly what we want to invest in. Because the voice of residents matters not only on election day, but on all the other 1,460 days as well. Residents should have ownership of their living environment, and Eemsdelta has a strong community. We want to use that strength by letting residents and the municipality genuinely shape our future together. No token participation, but real influence for you as residents.

In short, we choose a different course. We dare to change and we do what is necessary, together with you. This is how we build an Eemsdelta that everyone can be proud of. We are ready to get to work: European Thinking, Local Action.



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1. Our identity and culture

Eemsdelta is a municipality with a soul. From Termunten to Middelstum and from Appingedam and Delfzijl to the smallest villages: each has its own story, dialect and traditions. Our community has often been put to the test – by population shrinking, by gas extraction, by the loss of facilities – but time and again we show that we are resilient. Precisely this resilience is our pride: we maintain our identity and build a new future together. Volt wants to make this pride visible, cherish it and strengthen it. Not by looking back, but by moving forward with our own culture, events and nightlife.

1.1 Cherishing the regional language

Our villages and towns have their own sound, and the Groningen regional language is part of that. By placing bilingual town name signs at the entrances to our villages, we make our pride visible. It gives residents a sense of recognition and also shows visitors that our language is an integral part of our identity.

Making the regional language visible and protecting it is a local choice and is also in line with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in which member states commit themselves to recognising and strengthening regional languages. While Friesland has long been at the forefront with Frisian, more and more regions in the Netherlands are opting for visible recognition of their language. Volt believes that Eemsdelta should not lag behind in this regard – in fact, we should be at the forefront. Our regional language is not a detail from the past, but a source of pride with which we can face the future together.

Volt wants:

- ✓ To make the Groningen regional language visible and recognisable in public spaces, in line with the European Charter for Regional Languages.
- ✓ The municipality to add the Groningen name to all town name signs.

1.2 Stimulating art and culture

Eemsdelta is bursting with hidden gems: from seal watching in Termunten to the war museum in Middelstum and from medieval facades to local musicians. Traces of craftsmanship, creativity and history can be found everywhere. Yet, many residents are barely aware of how much art and culture there is to be found in their area. Volt wants everyone in Eemsdelta to be able to experience art and culture – close to home, recognisable and accessible to all. Art and culture are not a luxury, but a reflection of our society and the driving force behind a vibrant and connected community.

Volt wants the municipality to increase the visibility of our arts and culture sector and support initiatives that give local artists, creators and institutions more of a platform – for residents and visitors alike. From exhibitions in village halls to art in public spaces, from pop-up galleries to local music and theatre productions. Tourist promotion is also a part of this: Volt wants Eemsdelta to profile itself more strongly as a cultural destination in the northern Netherlands, with a focus on heritage, museums and local creative talent.

In addition, Volt proposes the 'Young Talent Strippenkaart': a pass that gives young people low-cost or free access to museums, concerts and performances in the region. The municipality encourages cooperation between schools, cultural institutions and transport operators to literally and figuratively get young people moving towards art and culture.

Volt wants:

- ✓ A young talent 'strippenkaart' to bring young people into contact with art and culture on a structural basis.
- ✓ The municipality to free up funds for art in the development of public spaces and to involve local creators in the execution.
- ✓ The municipality to support initiatives that give the arts and culture sector in Eemsdelta more visibility and cohesion.

1.3 Strengthening events

Events are the beating heart of our villages and towns. From Damsterdag and DelfSail to village fairs and small festivals: celebrating together strengthens our bond. Our municipality already supports organisations in several areas, which is very valuable. However, organisers still often find that permits are complicated or that it is unclear what the municipality can do for their event.

Volt wants to do things differently. Firstly, there will be a single, clear digital desk for events, with clear checklists and fixed deadlines for permits. In addition, the municipality itself must also play a role in taking care of things. We propose making a package of practical facilities available to smaller organisations. These could include road plates, traffic controllers, waste containers and information letters for residents in the event of road closures. By arranging and bundling this in advance, you avoid unpredictable costs and volunteers can focus on the content of their event.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The local council to protect and support local traditions such as annual village and town festivals.
- ✓ A single municipal digital service desk with clear and fast procedures.
- ✓ A municipal practical facilities package (e.g. road plates, traffic controllers, waste containers, resident letters).

1.4 Going out in Eemsdelta

A vibrant municipality is alive during the day, in the evening and at night. Currently, young people and students often travel to Groningen for a night out, even though there is room for a vibrant nightlife here too. This requires cooperation and coordination between local businesses, organisers, residents and the municipality.

Volt therefore wants to appoint a night mayor. This independent liaison represents the nightlife to the municipality, brings hospitality and culture together and ensures a balance between creativity, safety and quality of life. In cities such as Groningen and Amsterdam, the night mayor has already demonstrated that this is not a symbolic role, but a position that makes a real difference: from better cooperation between parties to more space for music, culture and safe nights. We want that in Eemsdelta too.

In addition, we want to review the policy on closing times. Currently, most village festivals and events have to end at two o'clock in the morning. For many people, this is frustrating: these parties are *the moments when we come together as a community and celebrate that we're together*. It is a shame when that party is cut short so early. This also causes financial problems for the organisers because shorter opening hours limit their income. In consultation with village associations, the hospitality industry and organisers, Volt wants to make flexible and longer closing times possible. This way, we can give nightlife more space without losing sight of the quality of life.

Volt wants:

- ✓ To elect a night mayor to act as a liaison between the municipality, the hospitality industry, cultural organisations and residents.
- ✓ Generous and flexible closing times for events and hospitality establishments, agreed with residents and organisers.



2. Living in Eemsdelta

Living in the municipality of Eemsdelta should once again become a matter of course. Young people who want to stand on their own two feet, families who would like to move up to a bigger place and older people who want to continue living in their village: everyone should be able to find a place to live, but at the moment that's not the case. First-time buyers have to wait years for a home, older people are stuck in houses that no longer suit them, and many villages are seeing young people leave. Volt is committed to a municipality where housing is affordable, accessible and safe; in every neighbourhood, for every generation.

2.1 Building for tomorrow

Imagine: in every village in Eemsdelta, young people can finally find affordable housing, older people can live comfortably in homes around courtyards where neighbours look out for each other, and there is room for families to grow. No more endless waiting lists, but a natural flow that ensures every home suits the stage of life of its residents. That is the future Volt wants to build to.

The reality is different. While construction is underway, it is often unclear to residents how many homes are actually being added and for whom they are intended. This lack of clarity undermines confidence.

Volt has chosen a different course: building for the community. We are inspired by the Viennese model. In Vienna, homes have been owned by associations and the municipality for a hundred years. This keeps them affordable, including for future generations, and allows people from different income groups to live side by side. It creates lively neighbourhoods where you can live your whole life. We want to translate that idea to Eemsdelta: cooperative housing that remains affordable and suits our villages.

Volt wants:

- ✓ To build 2,000 new homes within ten years, spread across all our villages and towns.
- ✓ New forms of housing for older people, so that they can continue living in their community.
- ✓ To encourage forms of housing where different generations live together – for example, in *hofjes* (suitable homes surrounding courtyards), residential groups or shared housing complexes – with attention to inclusivity and interaction.
- ✓ To make smart use of temporary and exchange homes and not let them disappear or stand empty, but make them part of the structural solution.
- ✓ A public dashboard where residents can see each year how many homes have been built and in which price range.

2.2 Housing market and affordability

The housing market must work for the residents of Eemsdelta — not the other way around. Young people, first-time buyers and families who want to build their future here should not be outcompeted by investors or by people from outside the area who buy affordable homes. Volt opts for a fair housing market with affordability and local ties at its core.

Other municipalities, such as Groningen, focus primarily on affordability and a healthy mix of housing. Volt Eemsdelta goes one step further: we want young people from Eemsdelta to have a fair chance to continue living in their own village or town. This is possible, provided that the municipality makes use of the scope provided by law to allocate part of the housing stock to residents with local ties in times of scarcity.

Volt wants:

- ✓ A priority policy whereby up to half of the new and affordable homes are allocated on a priority basis to residents with ties to Eemsdelta, with special attention to young people.
- ✓ To maintain and update purchase protection and the owner-occupancy requirement, so that starter homes do not immediately fall into the hands of investors.
- ✓ To establish a healthy mix of social housing, mid-range rental properties and affordable owner-occupied properties in every new project.
- ✓ To experiment with housing associations based on the model in Vienna, so that homes remain affordable and mixed neighbourhoods are created.

2.3 Reinforcement and safety

The earthquakes have affected more than just houses. They have disrupted our villages, our confidence and our daily lives. Many residents still bear the consequences every day – through cracks in their walls, but also in their minds and hearts. Volt is part of that community. We know what it means to have to wait for years, to receive letters without clarity, to feel like you are on your own.

We also realise that the municipality cannot solve this problem on its own. But it can show which side it is on. Volt wants Eemsdelta to position itself as an ally of its residents – a municipality that thinks along with them, protects them and stands up for the people who have been living in uncertainty for too long. A municipality that doesn't stand against its residents in the reinforcement operation, but alongside them, and defends their interests towards authorities like NCG and IMG.

This issue calls for cooperation, not party politics. The damage done to us transcends party lines. Volt wants Eemsdelta to speak with one voice to The Hague – with dignity, tenacity and unity. As Volt, we can offer something extra here: thanks to our national and European connections, we can carry Groningen's voice beyond our municipal boundaries.

For us, reinforcement is not only about recovery, but also about the future. It is an opportunity to rebuild stronger, more sustainably and more beautifully – with respect for our history and pride in who we are. The medieval town centre of Appingedam, our churches, farms and village views deserve protection, not bureaucracy. In any reinforcement, heritage must be seen as something to cherish, not as an obstacle.

We are literally rebuilding a region for a generation that does not yet own a home and therefore has little say, but which will build its life here. The choices we make now will determine how safe, sustainable and liveable the Eemsdelta will be for them in the future. That is why Volt wants the municipality to apply the generation test to every decision, so that we not only restore what was there before, but also build for what is yet to grow.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The local council to act as an ally of residents in earthquake-related matters and defend their interests towards the NCG and IMG.
- ✓ Eemsdelta to take a united and apolitical stance, with one clear message to The Hague.
- ✓ Room for historic and future-proof construction in reinforcement and reconstruction, so that heritage is preserved and strengthened.
- ✓ Decisions on restoration to be subject to a generational test, so that choices are sustainable and fair for future generations.
- ✓ The municipality to utilise its connections with national and European networks to continually defend the interests of our region.



3. A reliable, smart and effective municipality

Democracy is not without obligation and cannot be taken for granted. Even in ancient Rome, citizens gathered in the forum to give direction to their city. The idea was simple: decisions gain more support and power when they are made together with the community.

In Eemsdelta, however, residents often experience the opposite. People give their opinions or take part in participation evenings, but then see no reflection of this in the final decision. This feels pointless and damages trust in the municipality.

Volt wants to do things differently. For us, democracy is more than just voting once every four years: it is an ongoing conversation. A reliable, smart and effective municipality listens and shows what happens with the input of its residents. This requires a digital government that is accessible, secure and ethically responsible, as well as a local government that works openly and honestly.

3.1 Democracy is something we do together

Good decisions are made when we utilise the knowledge and experiences of all residents – not just those who shout the loudest. Volt wants residents to have more real say through citizens' assemblies and other innovative forms of participation.

However, participation does not stop with residents. Civil servants also play a crucial role. Volt believes it is important that they are close to our residents and use their insights in developing and implementing policy. Volt believes participation starts with the 'why question' behind regulations: why are we making this policy and who does it concern?

This means: a clear mandate, a diverse and randomly selected composition, and above all, a visible translation of input into policy. Residents must feel that their voice matters and that their contribution has an effect.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The municipality to organise at least one public consultation per year on an important issue (such as housing, energy generation on roofs or safety). Residents are selected by drawing lots and receive support such as expense allowances, childcare and guidance. The municipal council must respond formally: adopt, amend or reject with justification.
- ✓ The responsible official and/or civil servants to be present at every municipal participation event and for substantive feedback to be provided to all those involved.
- ✓ That every policy document in which participation played a role not only states how residents were involved, but also what influence their input had on the choices and the result.
- ✓ That civil servants working on new policy or its implementation take part in the participation process so that their expertise bridges the gap between policy and practice.

3.2 Digital municipality

If you want to contact the municipality, you increasingly do so via a screen. Reporting a broken lamppost, applying for a permit or receiving a letter with a decision: it's usually done digitally. This can be convenient, but only if you understand what the text is saying and know what happens with your personal information. If systems are unclear or computers make decisions without any explanation, it feels as if the municipality is far removed from you.

Volt wants you to be able to trust the digital municipality. That means clear language, openness about how decisions are made and always the option to speak to a real person if you can't figure it out.

Volt also wants to guarantee digital sovereignty, which will significantly reduce our dependence on American big tech by offering European alternatives for digital solutions such as cloud storage, artificial intelligence and social media. We are therefore strongly in favour of further expanding the Groningen AI factory in the coming years.

Volt wants:

- ✓ An official who specifically works on digitisation, such as digital services and data and information security.
- ✓ The municipality to report all algorithms used by the municipality to the Dutch government's Algorithm Register by the end of 2026.
- ✓ Digital services that everyone can use: letters in clear language, accessible websites (WCAG-proof) and always the option of a human point of contact.
- ✓ Use of open standards and interchangeable systems, so that the municipality does not become dependent on a single supplier.
- ✓ Public education and support in the field of digital security, so that residents are better protected against online risks and can be sure that their data is secure.

3.3 Open government

You want to be able to trust that decisions are made fairly and that it is clear where your tax money is going. Volt wants the municipality to work in an open, honest and transparent manner. This means openness about who is talking to whom or how money is being spent, and that decisions are assessed for their long-term effects. Too often, policy is made for the short term, while today's choices can have major consequences for future generations.

That is why Volt is introducing the generation test: every important decision will be measured against this framework with the question: what will this mean in 10, 20 or 30 years' time? Will young people benefit from it, or are we just passing the bill on to them? This is fairer and also prevents short-term thinking from undermining our quality of life and our future.

Volt wants:

- ✓ An open budget on an easy-to-access website with infographics that clearly show where your tax money is going, in clear graphs and with a brief explanation instead of lengthy documents.
- ✓ A generational test for major decisions, so that policy is always assessed in terms of what it means for young people and future generations.



4. Work and economy

Eemsdelta has much more to offer than is often thought. Our ports, industry, small businesses and nature together form a strong foundation, but their full potential is far from being realised. Too often we see opportunities being missed: in innovation, in cooperation and in the way residents benefit from economic growth.

Volt wants to change that. With ambition and courage, we are committed to an economy that looks beyond short-term profit: green, circular and fair. An economy in which businesses flourish and in which our villages, entrepreneurs and residents also emerge stronger. Because only when everyone participates can Eemsdelta realise its full potential and quality of life be cherished.

4.1 Ports and industry

The ports and manufacturing industry are the engine of our economy. This is where the greatest opportunities lie for the transition to hydrogen, bio-based raw materials and circular production. The municipality must set clear preconditions and collaborate with companies so that the profits go not only to shareholders, but also to the residents of Eemsdelta. Employment and economic growth are welcome, but not at the expense of the quality of life in villages. We are choosing for policies that centralise people, the environment and the community.

Volt wants:

- ✓ A municipality that works together with the business community and surrounding municipalities to accelerate the introduction of hydrogen and circular and bio-based raw materials.
- ✓ To create conditions that allow residents to benefit from new jobs, for example through cooperative projects.
- ✓ To give local entrepreneurs and start-ups room to grow by reducing bureaucracy and investing in innovation.
- ✓ To tackle noise pollution, traffic congestion and pollution around industrial areas so that villages remain liveable.
- ✓ To invest in green buffers and safe infrastructure (such as bicycle paths and public transport) between industrial and residential areas.

4.2 Small businesses and shopping centres

Strong village centres and shopping centres are more than just places to shop: they are the beating heart of our community. Events and markets exist thanks in part to the support of local entrepreneurs. If small businesses weaken, we also lose our meeting places, our events and, with them, part of our identity.

Volt wants:

- ✓ To maintain and even strengthen the municipality's business counter.
- ✓ The municipality to, by default, first spend its money locally.
- ✓ To support events and markets, because they are directly linked to a strong small business sector.
- ✓ The municipality to work with businesses to create compact and attractive shopping areas that combat vacancy and encourage local shopping.

4.3 Tourism

Eemsdelta has a lot to offer: the mounds with old churches, the hanging kitchens of Appingedam and the Groningen countryside. Tourism should contribute to a vibrant region without compromising quality of life.

Volt wants:

- ✓ A municipality that invests in sustainable and cultural tourism, focusing on heritage, events and nature.
- ✓ A municipality that cooperates regionally to encourage tourists to stay in the region longer.

4.4 Sustainable growth

Eemsdelta contributes significantly to the Dutch energy transition. With the help of solar parks and wind turbines, we produce more than 1% of the Dutch energy supply, while there are 342 municipalities. Our share is relatively large, and we can be proud of that. That is precisely why we must also be careful.

Sustainability is about more than just the climate. It is about quality of life, future-proofing and responsibility for the generations that will come after us. We want a strong economy that does not deplete the earth, but restores it. An economy that creates jobs that will last and leaves behind a landscape that is still worth living in.

That means we have to set boundaries. We are in favour of sustainable solutions and the energy transition, but against landscape pollution. No new wind turbines in our villages and no solar parks on agricultural or natural land. We must use the space we have wisely. The roofs of businesses, schools, warehouses and homes must become the new power stations. Business parks and industrial estates can become energy hubs where generation, storage and innovation come together. This way, we can strengthen the transition without further sacrificing the landscape.

Our industry has a key role to play in this. In Delfzijl, we are already seeing the first examples of the chemistry of the future: companies investing in circular processes, bio-based raw materials and hydrogen. That is sustainable growth in practice — growth that creates jobs, brings us closer to our climate goals and respects the living environment.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The municipality to fully commit to solar panels on the roofs of homes, schools and commercial buildings, with regulations for roof reinforcement and cooperation with energy associations.
- ✓ Business parks to be developed into energy hubs, where generation, storage and consumption are intelligently linked, and local employment is expanded.
- ✓ The municipality not to support new wind turbines or solar parks on agricultural or natural land and to push for a fairer distribution of the national energy challenge across the Netherlands.
- ✓ Extra support for companies making the transition to circular and climate-neutral production, with an emphasis on innovation at the Delfzijl chemical park.
- ✓ That a generation test is applied to economic and spatial decisions, so that growth contributes to a sustainable and liveable region for the next thirty years.



5. Education and talent development

The future of Eemsdelta is linked to the future of our young people. Good education and equal opportunities are indispensable in this regard. Young people must be able to discover their talents, feel safe and have prospects for work or studying in their own region. All too often, we see young people leaving because they find more opportunities elsewhere or because opportunities depend on their background. Volt wants education in Eemsdelta to be more than just a transfer of knowledge: it should be a kick-off to the future.

5.1 Campus Eemsdelta

The Eemsdelta Campus is one of the largest educational projects in our region. It brings secondary education and vocational education together under one roof, with sports, culture and meeting spaces. The building is impressive, but a campus is more than just bricks and mortar.

Many residents also recognise the concerns: social safety, atmosphere and connectedness continue to require attention. Volt acknowledges this and wants to contribute to solutions. The central question to us is: how do we make the campus a place where young people develop in the classroom, feel safe and can grow in their talents?

Volt wants:

- ✓ To further develop Campus Eemsdelta as a place where learning, sport and culture come together.
- ✓ To focus on social safety and well-being: a campus where everyone feels seen, heard and safe.
- ✓ Municipal support for programmes that challenge young people to discover and further develop their talents.

5.2 Internships and connection to the labour market

Many young people leave Eemsdelta because they have no prospects here for work or education. At the same time, companies indicate that they are short of people. Education and the local business community are not connecting enough, which causes young people to seek their future outside the region.

Volt wants sufficient internships, good work-study programmes and connections to the jobs of tomorrow. We want a community that trains young people and helps them find work in our region: in healthcare, mechanics, technology, sustainability and culture.

Volt wants:

- ✓ An internship and work-study agreement with local businesses and educational institutions, so that every student can find a position.
- ✓ The municipality to set a good example and maximise the number of interns it takes on by 2030.
- ✓ A youth advisory council that has a structural say in matters relating to work and entrepreneurship in Eemsdelta.

5.3 International opportunities

Education does not stop at the municipal border. Young people who gain international experience return with new ideas, energy and perspectives. Programmes such as Erasmus+ and cooperation with European partners prove that exchanging works. Unfortunately, in practice, these opportunities are often only available to a limited group.

Volt wants every young person in Eemsdelta to have the opportunity to look beyond the border. Not because we want to lose everyone to other countries, but because we know that young people who return with a broader perspective strengthen our region. International experiences make young people more resilient, creative and future-oriented.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Municipal support and encouragement for participation in European programmes, so that more young people from Eemsdelta can take part in study trips and exchanges.
- ✓ A municipality that encourages and supports local organisations and educational institutions in joining European exchange programmes, with which we will introduce young talent to our region.
- ✓ To encourage international partnerships for schools, sports clubs and youth organisations in Eemsdelta.



6. Participating with security and care close by

Financial security and accessible healthcare are the foundation of a dignified life. In Eemsdelta, we see too many residents who struggle to make ends meet, have insecure jobs or go into debt counselling only to later find themselves in trouble again. At the same time, healthcare is also under pressure. Volt chooses trust and real opportunities to participate. And we are bringing healthcare back to the neighbourhood, so that everyone – young and old – can count on aid and support that is close by, personal and accessible.

6.1 Small incomes and poverty

Too many people fall through the cracks: they earn just too much for the food bank or special assistance, but have too little left to make ends meet. A municipality with guts does not look away. It stands by these people.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The municipality to proactively inform residents about regulations, programs and support. There must be room for a personal approach: personal circumstances and spendable income are considered, so that residents who would otherwise be left out are still helped.
- ✓ Income support, programs and regulations to also target low-income workers, such as the self-employed, part-timers and flex workers.

6.2 Care close by and for everyone

Good healthcare is a prerequisite for truly being able to participate in society. Elderly care is growing, the hospital is gone, GPs are disappearing from villages and staff are scarce. Volt wants healthcare to become accessible and personal again – not only in the city, but in every community.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Local support centres in villages and neighbourhoods, where residents can go with questions about care, well-being and support.
- ✓ More prevention: investing in mental health, sports facilities, healthy nutrition and early detection.
- ✓ Opportunities for young people in our region to be trained for careers in healthcare so that they can continue to live here and make a meaningful contribution.
- ✓ Closer cooperation between GPs, home care and social teams, so that care is truly organised around the individual.

7. A safe and inclusive municipality

Safety is about more than just the police or law enforcement. It's about trust: knowing that you can cycle home safely, that your children won't come into contact with street dealing and that you can be yourself without fear of discrimination. In Eemsdelta, we see that residents are concerned about dark routes, about young people coming into contact with drugs at an early age and about a society that sometimes becomes divided. Volt chooses courage and progress: investing in prevention, smart solutions, and a community where everyone feels welcome.

7.1 Safety on the streets

Everyone should be able to move freely and safely in our municipality – both during the day and at night. Currently, there are still cycling and walking routes where our residents feel unsafe in the dark. We must take that feeling seriously.

Volt wants to invest in safety measures that work and fit in our landscape: targeted lighting in consultation with residents, without unnecessary light pollution.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Smart, sustainable lighting on dark cycling and walking routes, so that safety is increased without burdening the landscape with excessive light.
- ✓ A safety map on which residents can identify and prioritise problem areas.
- ✓ To have the municipality and youth organisations work together around hangouts: not chasing people away, but talking to each other and providing safe and attractive alternatives

7.2 Coffeeshop policy

There is currently only one coffeeshop in Eemsdelta. At the same time, we see street dealing flourishing and young people coming into contact with drugs or even becoming involved in dealing at an early age. The current policy is not working: repression alone pushes the trade further into the underworld.

Volt opts for a mature, progressive policy: regulate and decriminalise where possible, take strict action against crime where necessary. By allowing more legal and regulated channels, we bring the trade out of the shadows and make it safer for everyone.

Volt wants:

- ✓ To revise the maximum of one coffeeshop to multiple, regulated shops in suitable locations throughout the municipality.
- ✓ To join the national 'closed chain' trial, so that only controlled and safe cannabis is sold.
- ✓ Clear conditions for permits: no locations near schools or youth centres, residential streets and mandatory public education about prevention.
- ✓ Strict enforcement against nuisance and street dealing, combined with good education and prevention programmes for young people.
- ✓ Regular monitoring of effects such as nuisance and the extent to which minors come into contact with cannabis, so that policy can be adjusted as needed.

7.3 Equal opportunities and inclusion

Safety also means that everyone can be themselves. Residents still experience discrimination or exclusion, whether it is based on disability, race, heritage, gender or sexual orientation. Inclusion should not be optional, but a core value of our community.

Volt believes this starts with the accessibility of municipal services and a public space where everyone feels welcome. Equal opportunities are not a bonus, but the core of a safe society.

Volt wants:

- ✓ An accessible municipality: letters in clear language (B1), digital services that everyone can use and always a human point of contact: someone who can help when municipal policies, letters or processes become too complicated.
- ✓ A public space that is accessible and safe for everyone; think more guide lanes for the blind and visually impaired, and more wheelchair ramps.
- ✓ To stimulate equal treatment: seriously acting on reports of discrimination, increasing awareness and cooperating with existing institutions where necessary.

7.4 Mobility and accessibility: everyone must be able to participate

In a sprawling municipality such as Eemsdelta, mobility is essential for participation. Even without a car or bicycle, you still need to be able to get to school, work, the doctor or an activity. Volt wants every community to be well connected, including for those who depend on public transport. Mobility is not a luxury, but a prerequisite for equal opportunities, quality of life and inclusion. That is why Volt opts for sustainable, smart and accessible transport solutions that are appropriate to the scale of Eemsdelta.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Better bus connections between villages, with sufficient frequency on Saturdays and in the evenings so that you can still go somewhere and come back again.
- ✓ To support the use of neighbourhood buses, shared taxis and electric shared cars, especially in villages without facilities.
- ✓ To invest in safe cycle routes between towns and to schools, public transport stops and healthcare facilities.
- ✓ To strengthen public transport services for young people so that they can travel independently to school, work and sports activities.
- ✓ A municipal mobility vision that focuses on sustainability, inclusion and accessibility.

8. Liveable localities as a healthy foundation

Our villages and neighbourhoods are where life happens. Where children learn to ride a bicycle, where neighbours greet each other, where elderly people chat on a bench. Volt wants every community in Eemsdelta to be healthy, safe and inviting. A place where people meet and feel at home. Because liveable villages and neighbourhoods form the basis of a strong municipality.

8.1 Child-friendly villages/neighbourhoods and safe streets

In a liveable municipality, children can play, learn and grow up safely. Volt wants every child in Eemsdelta to be able to grow up healthy, free and happy – in villages where you can cycle to school, play in the street and where meeting people happens naturally.

Eemsdelta has joined UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities programme and is working to develop policies that focus on the interests and well-being of children through the Jong Goud Eemsdelta programme. Volt supports this commitment and wants the municipality to continue to strengthen this partnership. Child-friendly policies should not be confined to an appendix, but should be put into practice in every neighbourhood and every village.

That is why we want road safety, play areas and meeting places to always be designed together with residents, parents and young people. From speed bumps to playgrounds: those who use them every day know best what works.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Road safety measures such as speed bumps, crosswalks and lighting to be designed in consultation with residents and schools.
- ✓ Every village centre to have safe and stimulating play and exercise areas where children and young people can meet.
- ✓ A 'child-friendliness check' to be carried out as standard when redesigning streets, so that play and safety are always taken into account.
- ✓ The municipality to continue to support and expand the Jong Goud Eemsdelta programme, so that the interests of children are structurally taken into account in all policy decisions.

8.2 Clean and healthy streets

A liveable locality is also a clean locality. Messy verges and full litter bins affect the street scape and the sense of pride. Volt wants to involve residents in keeping their living environment clean — with practical resources and room for initiative. Think of residents themselves indicating where extra litter bins or deposit-related collection points are needed, or adopting a street or park.

Clean and healthy also means good water and air quality. Volt wants every village to have its own public water tap — a simple facility with a big impact. This way, we promote public health, reduce the use of plastic and stimulate people meeting in public spaces.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The municipality to install a public water tap in every village centre and town centre.
- ✓ Bins for packaging with deposits, like bottles and cans, to be placed next to rubbish bins in locations suggested by residents, in order to reduce litter and cans on the roadside.

8.3 Green and biodiversity in our living environment

Greenery makes us happy. Yet, many of our roadsides, parks and lawns are actually 'green deserts': they appear lively, but offer little food or shelter for insects and birds. Volt wants the council to change this by opting for native plants, flower-filled verges and as little mowing as possible. Mowing only for visibility and traffic safety is cheaper and also better for nature.

Volt is inspired by the 3-30-300 rule, which states that everyone should be able to see three trees from their home, that neighbourhoods should have at least 30% tree canopy cover and that there should always be access to greenery within 300 metres. In our sprawling municipality, we apply this rule flexibly: not as dogma, but as a guideline. Views of trees, shade in the street and nearby nature contribute to well-being everywhere — in cities and villages alike.

Volt wants:

- ✓ The municipality to opt for native and flower-rich planting on verges and in parks instead of monotonous grass.
- ✓ To reverse the mowing policy to 'mow when necessary', with clear communication to residents.
- ✓ That when streets and village squares are redesigned, at least three mature trees are visible and greening is always included in the design.
- ✓ The council to report annually on biodiversity in public spaces and to set up projects with residents to improve it.



9. Eemsdelta and Europe

Europe is not just Brussels. Europe is also Eemsdelta – and Eemsdelta is Europe. We are part of the major challenges of our time: climate, energy, migration and security. These issues transcend borders, but the solutions start here, in our villages and towns. Think European, act local.

You can see that close to home. Cooperation with our German neighbours in the Ems Dollart Region makes the border more open and stronger. Young people who go to school or do internships through a European exchange bring new skills back to their own communities. And when companies here produce hydrogen or develop bioplastics, we help our region move forward and also contribute to the goals of Europe as a whole. Volt wants Eemsdelta to participate fully in that European story. By seizing opportunities, securing funding and proudly showing what we have to offer Europe.

9.1 Seizing European opportunities

Europe is making billions available for innovation, sustainability, education and cross-border cooperation. But these funds often go to regions that are more alert with their applications. As a municipality, we must therefore not wait, but take the initiative ourselves.

Volt wants:

- ✓ Eemsdelta to appoint a European Opportunities & Subsidies Specialist: someone who identifies funds and partnerships, links them to local projects and assists with applications.
- ✓ Small local initiatives from schools, associations, village halls and entrepreneurs to receive simple guidance so that they too can benefit from European funds.

9.2 Cross-border cooperation

What works elsewhere can also work here. European cities and regions show that with courage and cooperation, you can achieve a lot. In Lisbon, residents help decide on part of the budget each year through participatory budgeting: a way of making their say tangible. The ports of Copenhagen, Malmö and Zeebrugge show how you can combine security and sustainability with strong international connections. Our own town twinning with Aurich and Shuhan City, and participation in the Ems Dollart Region, prove that cross-border cooperation just makes sense.

Volt wants:

- ✓ For Eemsdelta to establish partnerships with at least two municipalities in other EU countries that, like us, are facing challenges regarding population decline, the port industry or energy transition, before 2028, so that we can exchange knowledge and policies.
- ✓ To translate best practices from Europe to Eemsdelta: from cooperative energy projects to participatory budgeting.
- ✓ To strengthen cooperation with the Ems Dollart Region and Aurich with projects that directly involve residents, such as joint festivals, cycle routes or energy initiatives.

More information

This programme was written using insights from scientific research, international practical examples and innovative policy initiatives. By combining knowledge with the experiences of residents and partners, Volt consciously chooses for future-oriented policies that work and connect.

For more information about **Volt Europe's policy**, click [here](#).

For more information about **Volt Netherlands' policy**, click [here](#).

For more information about **Volt Groningen's provincial policy**, for example on gas extraction or agriculture, click [here](#).

In addition to this election programme, political content is published on the social media pages of Volt Eemsdelta. **Follow us there to stay up to date!**

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