



Gemeente Voorschoten

Dear Voorschoten residents,

Christmas and New Year's Eve are just around the corner. This year these holidays have a double meaning for me. On the one hand, it marks my first Christmas as Mayor after my appointment on May 17th. For the past few months I've been getting to know the special facets that our municipality has to offer. In particular, being introduced to friendly and active residents, entrepreneurs, organisations and volunteers. Everyone wants to work together and show initiative to make their street, neighbourhood, village and municipality more beautiful and powerful. It makes me proud.

On the other hand, 2021 was an eventful year. We're still dealing with a pandemic no one thought would affect our lives as greatly. We must keep our distance, while we only want to be close to each other. Corona has brought a lot of grief. Yet I also see the beauty that this period has created. When we were forced to spend more time at home, we also paid more attention to our neighbours. Wonderful initiatives ensured we looked after our vulnerable residents - like doing their groceries. It may be inconsequential to one person, but of great significance for another. You all showed your best qualities. You've been showing your best qualities for almost two years now. That's admirable.

We're not there yet, so I hope we will face 2022 together as well. However, in stark contrast to this togetherness is intolerance. In a time where support is paramount, intolerance and intemperance seem to be on the rise, particularly on the street and in shops. To each other, but also to care providers who contribute to liveable and safe districts and neighbourhoods day and night. To the people in the care industry who've lightened our load under immense pressure for almost two years. We must never forget that all officers, firefighters, paramedics, nurses, etc. are also fathers or mothers, daughters or sons, or husbands or wives. They do their job in good faith. Let's respect each other's opinion and keep talking to each other.

Christmas is a time for hope, warmth and light. It's a time when we come together and celebrate new beginnings. This year, unfortunately, everything is different again. We are expected to celebrate Christmas at home, in a small circle. It's not easy, I realise that. But I hope we can all make that choice so we can celebrate Christmas next year with those close to our hearts. I also hope that during this difficult time we look after those who are alone completely. We need each other now more than ever.

I especially hope this Christmas becomes a period of reflection, and that we will continue to stand next to each other. That we continue to support each other. Becoming a beacon of light for someone.

I wish you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year!

Yours sincerely,
Nadine Stemerding
Mayor

