



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

BrusselsChildbirthTrust
Supporting Families and Parents-to-be in Belgium



CONTENTS

THE BCT'S MISSION STATEMENT SAYS

To provide help and support in English to families in and around Brussels during the early years of parenthood and beyond.

Intro	3
Membership	4
Volunteering	6
The Clubhouse	8
Prenatal Support	10
Postnatal Support	12
Groups	14
Events	18
Information	20
Communication	22
Online Media	24
Board of Directors	26
Finances	28
Accounts	29
BCT at a Glance	30

On the Cover:
Nikki @ Lea

INTRO

After two very difficult pandemic dominated years, 2022 has been a great year for the BCT!

Not only did we manage to launch a new website – which looks amazing, is user-friendly and is very informative and interactive - we also implemented a new membership management system and have now got our own App on Twizzit. The website gives a great first impression of our organisation and provides all the information about the BCT and the valuable services we provide, from prenatal courses and pregnancy and postnatal support, to playgroups, events and social gatherings.

The Twizzit app has been a huge success amongst our members. It holds an agenda with all our activities and it enables easy sign ups to all the playdates as well as registrations and bookings for talks, events, courses and classes that are taking place each day and week. Each listed event has a live feed feature which allows members to communicate directly with each other, so people can inform others if they are running late, for example.

The BCT Clubhouse has continued to thrive in 2022 and is enjoyed by so many of our members for playgroups, baby massage, talks, our interest groups and many other members courses – we even held painting classes and Christmas wreath making! We've also been renting out the Clubhouse to members for parties at the weekends and we are delighted that members have taken advantage of the offer, while also providing the BCT with some additional income.

We have enjoyed summer picnics in the parks, story time in the Clubhouse, Easter egg hunts and Halloween parties and, as always, our playgroups and events were made possible thanks to the continued generosity, creativity and adaptability of our volunteers. We even managed to set up several, well received, baby swimming groups so that our members can now take their babies and toddlers swimming guided by a private swimming instructor.



Over 2022 it was wonderful to see life returning largely to normal, as the BCT is known for its family friendly approach and social interactions.

Therefore, we shall be introducing more social events in the future. In 2023 the BCT will be 45 years old which we will celebrate with a big party for all members.

Thank you dearly, all volunteers and members, who make the BCT the wonderful, growing family community it is!



Louise

Louise Nugent
BCT President

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2022, 755 families held a BCT membership!

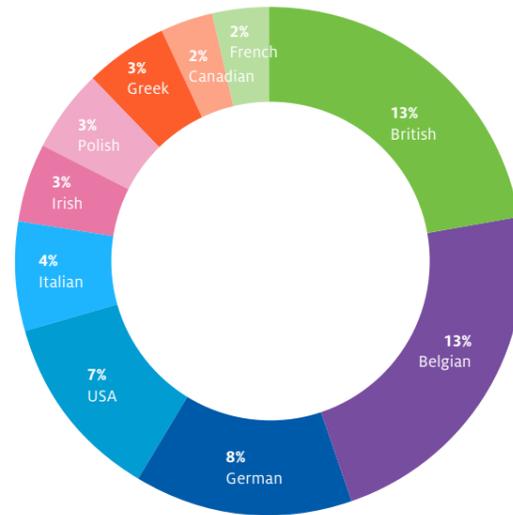
367 new members joined the BCT and 320 renewed their membership.

After the restrictions of the pandemic, we had an almost normal year and the Clubhouse that we opened back in 2020 has been used to its full potential.

April was very busy and, as usual, we had the most new members joining and renewals at the start of the new school year during September and October.

In May 2022 we launched Twizzit, our new management system. After a period of adjustments, the online payments have become smoother. The app version has been a huge improvement for membership renewals as it holds the personal profile of each member and allows the renewal with just a click. For new families joining the BCT, everything is well detailed on our new website. Members can now update their own details, display their Membership card on their smartphones and see the expiry date of their membership whenever needed. We are also using Twizzit to send out our weekly newsletter. Our Local Group Organisers can now search for members in their area in order to reach out to them and invite them to local group activities. Using one system ensures that we can reach out to all our current members when needed without having to maintain separate databases.

TOP 10 MEMBER'S NATIONALITIES

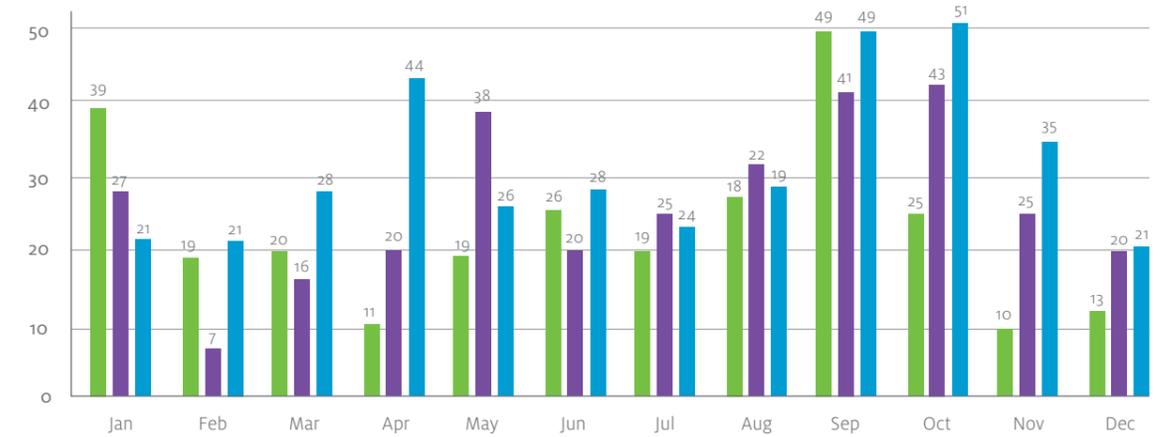


THE TOP RANKING COMMUNES FOR OUR 755 MEMBERS

1	Ixelles	143 families
2	Brussels	73 families
3	Woluwe-St-Lambert	66 families

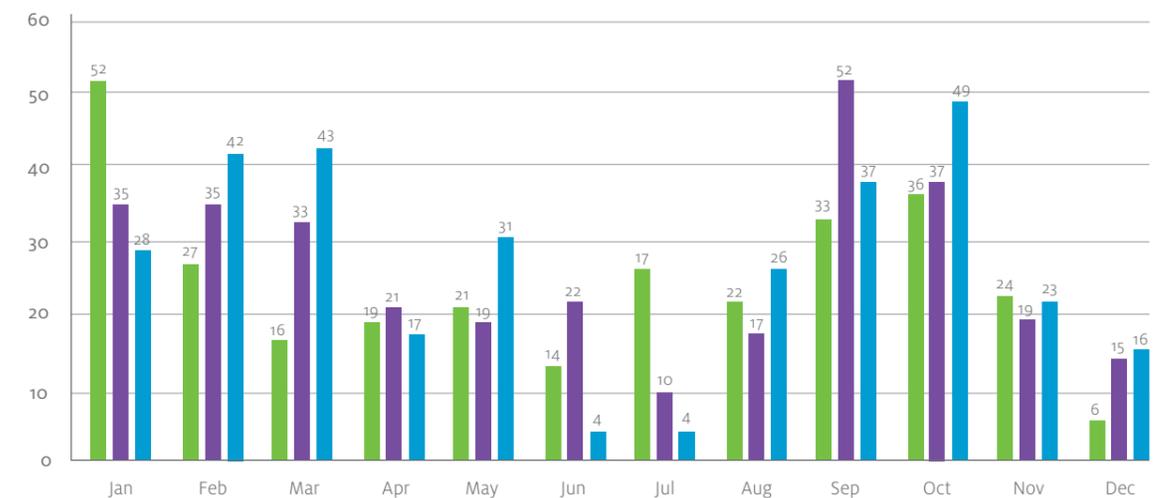
BCT MEMBERS IN 2022

755 FAMILIES



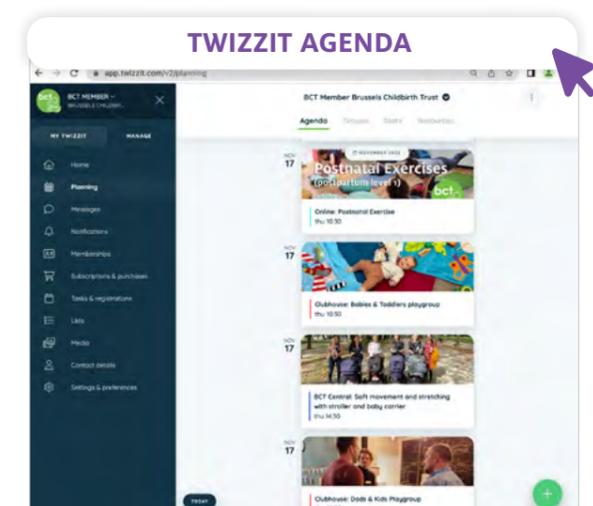
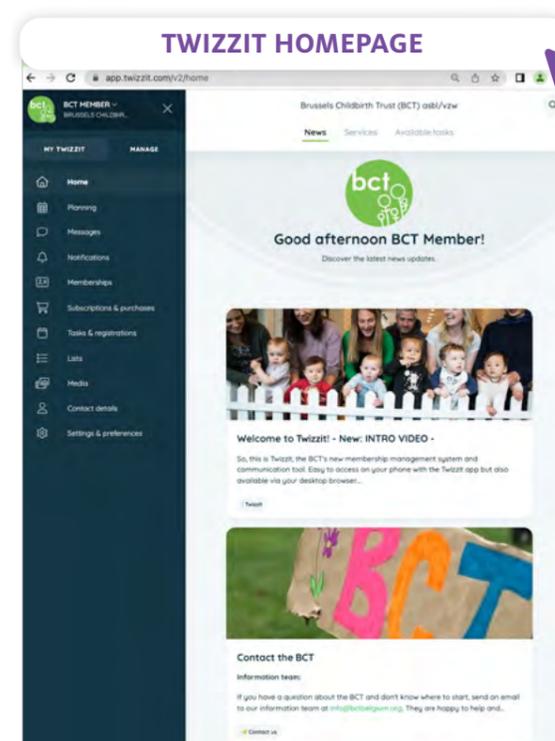
MONTHLY NEW MEMBERS PER YEAR

● 2020=268 ● 2021=304 ● 2022=367



MONTHLY RENEWALS PER YEAR

● 2020=287 ● 2021=315 ● 2022=320



VOLUNTEERING

The 'adaptability' referenced in 2021's AGM report continued through 2022. This time though not due to the changing Covid rules but due to the fact that we had to 'adapt' events and activities due to the **limited number of BCT volunteers** we had to support them.

In contrast though **2022 did see several volunteers take out BCT membership especially so they could realise their idea for a BCT group at the Clubhouse.** These members stepped forward to volunteer enthusiastically for new, mainly language interest or parenting, groups, which have increased our group portfolio and led to wonderful new regular meetings allowing members to share their enthusiasm and passion for these interests.

However, recruiting for volunteers to help with the 'day-to-day' running of the BCT, processing memberships, helping at large scale events etc. has been extremely difficult. Perhaps the hardest for many years. Understandably, without the much needed team of 'day-to-day' volunteers it makes running all the behind-the-scenes teams that support our groups and all the usual BCT family events much harder and sometimes even impossible. Board members had to step in to run most of the big events during 2022 when in previous years we had standalone event committees and board members acted only as a backup, stepping in when there were last minute changes or to offer additional support with refreshments.



Volunteering at Crafts for Christmas

Many volunteer opportunities were advertised in 2022 without a single member enquiring about them. The fact that no one stepped forward to take on the role of the Nearly New Sale Coordinator despite having a venue booked twice, regrettably meant no Nearly New Sale could take place in 2022. Resulting in a loss of urgently needed funds even though we have received many formal requests for such a sale from members.

When we did manage to organise events based on the expressed volunteering commitment of some members, regrettably many sent messages and pulled out of helping at the very last minute. Naturally as a volunteer run organisation, with most of our volunteers having young families, we have always been extremely sympathetic to last minute unforeseen changes, but realistically if everyone cancels at the last minute then the event just simply cannot go ahead.



Volunteering at Trunk or Treat

A special thank you this year must go to the 3 amazing American students who were visiting Europe on a volunteering scheme and who very kindly stepped in to help at our Crafts for Christmas Funday event. Their last-minute help really did save the day and after helping out at the various craft tables the students literally rushed to the airport to catch their flight home! We are extremely grateful for their support and allowing this popular annual BCT event to go ahead.

Thankfully towards mid 2022 a valuable 'gift' was given to the BCT Volunteer department in the form of the implementation of the new BCT Twizzit App. This has allowed many of the more laborious volunteer tasks to be streamlined and executed with a click of button. Payments and forms can be processed via our new app on Twizzit, which considerably saves time and links in the communication chain and ultimately reduces the workload on some of our volunteers. The number of volunteers regularly working to keep the BCT up and running at present is 80 volunteers. This number is severely decreased from previous years when we once had over 200 volunteers helping out, again highlighting the fact that more volunteers are taking on more than one role or task. Their adaptability to juggle more and more roles and their dedication to the work of the BCT is highly commendable, however this is a worrying trend as the responsibility of keeping the BCT running lies on the shoulders of fewer and fewer members.

Once again, it needs to be clearly stated that the BCT simply could not exist without its amazing team of volunteers. They remain the beating heart of the BCT and we very much appreciate all their commitment and enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, we clearly need more members to step up and volunteer to keep the soul of the BCT community alive!

We very much hope that 2022 was just a post corona blip and that in the future the BCT can once again establish a large community of member families that appreciate the need and the importance of volunteering. **If each member family volunteers just once a year, it can make such a big difference to BCT activities.**

This will hopefully mean that the BCT can enjoy its 45th Birthday with a complete programme of events thanks to a renewed and enlarged team of passionate volunteers!

The CLUBHOUSE

THE CLUBHOUSE

The BCT Clubhouse continues to provide families with a multifunctional and convivial space to meet up. With its sizeable and attractive garden, it was enjoyed throughout 2022, especially for Easter egg hunts, summer barbecues and general playgroups. Time and money were invested in the garden during 2022 for necessary general maintenance and occasional purchases, like the barbecue, and a wooden seating area was very kindly donated by members.

Although some prenatal courses, our Pregnancy in Belgium lectures, First Aid and some member courses remained online, the Clubhouse hosted many face-to-face meetings, much to the delight of members. These included events such as Halloween and Christmas parties, the Christmas Crafts fun day, family photo shoots, a volunteer party, regular playgroups, interest, support and local group meetings, talks, workshops and member courses. From spring to summer, we were more than happy to offer the Clubhouse as a welcoming and intimate space for regular gatherings of Ukrainian families who, having had to flee their country, were hosted by BCT members.

The rental of the Clubhouse to members for private parties, which began in July 2021, proved to be very successful with 42 bookings and a lot of positive feedback about our child-friendly premises. During another difficult financial year, this was a very welcome and needed additional source of revenue. In addition, several members renewed their membership to be able to book a party at the Clubhouse. Even a few non-members joined the BCT for this purpose. Parents who had attended parties at the BCT premises wanted to book their own at the Clubhouse and to enjoy other membership benefits.

A Meet & Greet Open Day was held one weekend in October to invite new members, non-members, and volunteers to visit the premises. In a boost to increase membership, the general public passing by was also invited to learn more about the child-friendly activities on offer inside the Clubhouse.



The Clubhouse



LIBRARY

The Clubhouse is home to the BCT lending library and on-site children's library. As playgroups resumed with greater attendance in 2022, more members were able to discover the books available. A new volunteer has taken over managing the library on site, as well as the book catalogue, which is listed on the BCT website. We hope to acquire some of the books which have been recommended to further enhance the library collection. We will also remind members that they may always donate any recently-published books to do with pregnancy, childbirth and raising children.

PLANS FOR 2023

A few improvements are planned for the storage space inside the Clubhouse and small general repairs will be carried out. We are looking to recruit a Clubhouse Supply Co-ordinator.



The Clubhouse

PRENATAL SUPPORT

2022 was still a difficult year for many but as the worry about COVID-19 infection lessened more couples began to ask for in-person courses.

We taught 13 Birth & Parenting courses involving 93 families, and 3 refresher sessions. Of the 13 B&P courses, 6 were in-person and 3 of these were in the last three months of the year.

There were a few course reunions at the Clubhouse, introducing new families to this wonderful family friendly space.

Our Pregnant & New Mums drop-in sessions which take place twice per month online have become increasingly popular and now have 158 mums on the related WhatsApp group which is its main means of communication.

Hypnobirthing courses, a specialised form of prenatal preparation which started in 2021, are facilitated by Kate Ellwood, who had previously given prenatal classes and who also organises the very popular New Mums group. 21 couples attended in 2022. The monthly hypnobirthing information class (free taster session) had 54 attendees.

PREGNANCY IN BELGIUM EVENINGS

Özra Gokce and Alison Copner continue to present the Pregnancy in Belgium Evening (PiB) classes on Zoom, which works well. They receive excellent feedback from attendees. The information booklet that is given to attendees is now totally updated and will be regularly reviewed in future.

We ran a total of 11 sessions in 2022, with 84 couples attending. There continue to be advantages of holding classes online. Couples can join both from distant or from separate locations if one person is working away from home.



Interesting to note that the Birth and Parenting courses, refresher sessions and PiB classes all had identical participant numbers to 2021.

Enormous thanks to the volunteer booking team for all these classes, and especially to the services treasurer who has stepped in to cover sickness and maternity leave and continues to give a bi-monthly update on all bookings.

FIRST AID FOR PARENTS

These classes, facilitated by certified First Aid Instructor, Kate Ellwood, changed somewhat when they moved online due to COVID-19. The popular virtual sessions concentrate on how to apply simple first aid principles with confidence. We hope to be able to offer some in-person classes in 2023.

The classes were very popular in 2022, with 229 participants: 149 members, and 80 non-members who pay a higher fee. 2021 participant numbers were 152.



PIB flyer
Prenatal courses flyer



POSTNATAL SUPPORT



On behalf of all BCT members, we thank our volunteers who continue to offer their time fulfilling the following postnatal service roles. We continue to receive positive feedback from those who use the services. We have new volunteers stepping up to fill new roles as well as to support current volunteers. We have added a new service and the demand of some postnatal services in 2022 has increased. The volunteers remain enthusiastic and motivated to provide the help that they can to fellow BCT members and new parents.

We continue to observe members seeking information primarily via social media. We welcome the community service that social media has brought but are also seeing that the person-to-person contact is essential to support new parents.

TENS AND VALLEY CUSHION RENTALS

TENS rentals remained steady over the last year. There have been periods when all machines were rented out at once. Two new machines were bought to replace two older ones. Women continue to look to alternatives for pain management during labour. Most couples renting the machines hear about the machines from the BCT prenatal classes. The Valley Cushions continue to be rented out occasionally.

EARLY DAYS SUPPORT

Early Days Support volunteers continue to reach out to new parents and provide a listening ear. The team's three volunteers managed to support as many new parents as in 2021. The team supported parents that followed a prenatal course with the BCT but also those members that contacted them directly. Support continues to vary from a single contact before or after birth to regular contacts. New volunteers expressed interest at the end of 2022 and will join the team in early 2023.

BREASTFEEDING & BOTTLEFEEDING SUPPORT

There are two active breastfeeding and bottlefeeding support volunteers. The demand for this service remains stable. The volunteers receive questions mostly via email, which they then often follow up by telephone.

They are present on our social media channels and try to support members when possible this way as well. There is very little demand for the bottle-feeding service as concerns are often addressed via social media groups within the BCT. We have revived a regular Breastfeeding Café at the Clubhouse which is well received by our members.



BABYWEARING SERVICE

Our newest service is the Babywearing Service which offers guidance and help in choosing the appropriate sling for parents and baby. Workshops on babywearing were incredibly successful and remain in high demand. In 2022 we were able to create a sling lending library to rent out slings for parents to try out before investing. This service is slowly taking off and reaching more and more BCT members.



EXPERIENCES REGISTER

The Experiences Register continues to be a valuable service for those who have specific needs and who seek peer support from another member having had a similar experience in a particular subject matter. The activity in this service continues to decrease, but the requests do still come to our volunteer via email. As in the past, some demands come through general postnatal services or BCT information services which are then forwarded to our Experiences Register volunteer.

CLOTH NAPPY SERVICE

Contacts are made by email and our volunteer continues to be active and to give out very helpful information, including online demonstrations to members. Cloth nappy use is expanding in Belgium making this an easier option for parents.

GROUPS

2022 has seen the revival of many BCT groups. After the pandemic, slowly our members have shown interest in meeting up again. The Playgroups at the Clubhouse are popular amongst members. Local groups leaders, as well as those that organise our interest and support groups, have played a very important role in keeping the BCT community together. They are gradually proposing again all kind of social gatherings such as family meet ups, playdates and coffee mornings.



Sing & Play at the Clubhouse

Thanks to the initiative of one of our volunteers we have now even got several baby and toddler swim groups. A big thank you goes to all the wonderful volunteers who run and organise our many groups and get together. Your enthusiasm creates so many fantastic and much needed opportunities for families with babies and older children to meet others.

All our groups have different needs and the group leaders manage to reach them using different social channels (Facebook, Whatsapp chats, Messenger chats and increasingly our new event agenda and communication tool on Twizzit) making interactions and communication more accessible and efficient.

<p>10 LOCAL GROUPS</p>	<p>10 SUPPORT GROUPS</p>	<p>16 INTEREST GROUPS</p>
---------------------------------------	---	--

CLUBHOUSE PLAYGROUPS

Our Clubhouse is still our very popular and busy hub. It currently hosts 7 regular weekday playgroups plus countless weekend playgroups, meetups and interest and support group gatherings.

LOCAL GROUPS

BCT has **10 active local groups** in Belgium, the most active ones are in and around Brussels. Many of our local group organisers put a lot of effort into connecting local members with each other by organising interesting and fun gatherings, editing regular newsletters and providing relevant family related information from their local neighbourhood.

The **Central group**, which is coordinated by an enthusiastic group leader, is connected through various Facebook groups as well as on Messenger chats. A regular Newsletter is sent out weekly. There are 170 members. Not many regular meetups were organized but the chats are very active and a lot of last minutes gatherings are happening. Many new mums have never even met in person but they are virtually well connected!



German Language Group



Clubhouse Cinema Club



Ixelles Local Group



Croatian Language Group

The **Ixelles/St. Gilles/Forest group** continues to be a great local group of support and information for families. Members mainly communicate through an active WhatsApp group.

The **Woluwe group** is run by a successful team of volunteers, well organized and full of ideas. The group counts 123 active members. The playdates, at different playgroup centers in the neighbourhood, and the coffee mornings and parent night outs are popular.

The **Tervuren group** is slowly growing thanks to a dedicated and active group organiser. It now counts 68 active members on Twizzit. Since last January people are willing to meet again and Friday coffee mornings are organized weekly.

The **Uccle group** has revived its activities thanks to an enthusiastic organizer who proposes weekday lunches, play afternoons and weekend family swim meet-ups just to name a few.

We're also seeing recently more activities being proposed again in our **Kraainem/Wezembeek group**.



Ukrianian Afterschool Support Group



Dad's Group BBQ

SUPPORT GROUPS

There are currently **10 BCT support groups**, which offer information, exchange of information and the chance to connect for members that are in a similar life situation. Some groups get together at the Clubhouse while others meet virtually or connect via Whatsapp or Facebook groups. The current groups are made up of **Parents of NICU (neonatal) Babies, Pregnant & New Mums Drop In, Parents of Special Needs Kids, Parents with Challenges, Single Parents, Twin and Multiples** – plus our active **IVF network** which also welcomes non-members.

Two new groups were set up: **(Future) Single Mums by Choice** meets regularly at the Clubhouse and our **Breastfeeding Café** has re-opened for regular meet-ups at the Clubhouse.

For **Twins and Multiples** and the **Divorce and Separation group** we are still looking for new group organisers.

INTEREST GROUPS

The BCT currently offers **16 interest groups**, amongst which the language groups are increasingly popular. We have a **Croatian language group, Spanish language group, Italian language group, German language group, Greek language group, Scandinavian language group, Irish language group, Chinese language group** and a **Polish language group**. They all offer an important opportunity for members' children to have playdates with other kids while being exposed to that specific language which is often only spoken by one parent or as a second language. The groups usually meet at weekends at the Clubhouse and organize activities such as baby disco, playdates, brunch and also family outings.

We are happy to see our **Dads group** revived, too, which now meets at weekly playdates for children accompanied by their dads at the Clubhouse.

The **Feminist Parenting group** is very active on WhatsApp (45 members) and the group meets once a month either at the Clubhouse or in one of Brussels' cafes.

The **Working Mums group** continues to be getting together for monthly early coffee meet-ups and/or lunch in the Schuman area. The group organiser not only coordinates these meetings but is very active in the group's Facebook group (182 members) and she writes a weekly newsletter for the group with BCT events and kid friendly activities around Brussels.



Splash & Play Baby Swimming

BABY AND TODDLER SWIM GROUP

A beloved BCT initiative was reinstated in March: Splash & Play our swim playgroup! The program welcomed over 140 families to join baby swimming on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and toddler swimming on Saturdays at the VUB University pool in Ixelles close to Etterbeek. The swimming sessions were led by professional swimming instructors specialising in programs for our age groups along with our volunteer group organisers. Parents and children learned fun and safe ways to play and engage in the water.

PLANS FOR 2023

We would like to increase communication and exchange between our local groups on levels of interest. This could be related to best practice solutions on how to organize a local group as a team effort or what activities to propose and how to engage members and encourage them to take the initiative and meet other members locally. We are also planning to bring popular BCT events into Brussels' neighbourhoods such as our Junior Cycling event or Easter Egg Hunt in order to strengthen our local communities and to use synergies and build connections between neighbouring local groups.



Auderghem/Watermael-Boitsfort Group



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

We are now looking for new group leaders for our local groups Waterloo, Uccle and Ixelles.



EVENTS

While our plans in the first half of the year were still restricted by the pandemic, we managed to organise some great events later in the year and, thanks to the versatility and creative thinking of our volunteers, came up with great new initiatives.

STORY TIME: We started Story Time & Crafts as a monthly weekend event. A book is selected to be read and a related craft was done. We have a few families that are interested in the concept and participate regularly.

SPRING PARTIES: This was our first social event of the year since relaxed Covid restrictions. We had an egg hunt and a dance party and many member families participated and had fun. Our local groups also used the Clubhouse for their communal parties which is a fantastic way to make best use of our premises but also of the beautiful seasonal decorations that volunteers put up to the delight of members and their children alike.

SUMMER PICNIC: We had a general summer picnic and a few local groups hosted their own. It was a lovely time coming together enjoying the sunshine and park. It was nice to also meet new families.

SPRING AND FALL FAMILY PHOTO SHOOT: This year we tried something new for the family photo shoot: We wanted to make the whole experience a bit more personal and professional and so we moved away from the standard school-photo-concept of the past. We teamed up with professional photographers, had different photo options, settings and backgrounds that members could choose from. Most members enjoyed the new concept and are excited to make it their annual family photo shoot.



Story Time & Crafts

OPEN DAY: We had two open days where everyone interested was invited to come and check out the Clubhouse, learn about the BCT and ask questions about membership. The October event, in particular, had a constant flow of people coming in to look around and have a cup of tea with the volunteers in charge.

VOLUNTEER PARTY: The first volunteers' party since the pandemic was a great success! About 30 volunteers came to spend a fun and lovely time at the Clubhouse with cheese, drinks and desserts. It was so nice to put faces to names, get to know new volunteers and meet familiar ones.

HALLOWEEN PARTIES: This year we re-ran the old time favourite Trunk'n Treat event for all our members at Valentino chocolate factory. Once again we were invited to use the factory's car park for the event. For the children (and some parents) a dream came true: they got to make their own chocolate lollipops decorated with sprinkles! A large number of families came to enjoy this special event and we had a selection of food to eat and some games to play. Some of our groups used the Clubhouse for their Halloween gatherings and parties and they all enjoyed the creatively decorated 'haunted' Clubhouse.



Halloween Trunk or Treat



Summer Picnic



Crafts for Christmas

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS FUNDAY: For the Christmas crafts funday we continued with the hybrid event concept because it was so successful in 2021. Members could choose to book a slot to prepare the crafts at the Clubhouse or purchase a 'click & collect' craft bag where they could prepare the seasonal crafts in the comfort of their own home guided by an online tutorial.

CHRISTMAS PARTIES: Some local groups chose to host their Christmas Parties at the Clubhouse so, once again, the seasonal decorations were enjoyed by many members.

NEARLY NEW SALE: At the start of the year, we had hoped to resume our largest fund-raising event. Several planning meetings were held to discuss adapting the format of these sales, so they complied with regulations. Selling online, smaller more specialised sales at the Clubhouse, limited number of participants, to name but a few ideas that were considered. However, we could not find volunteers to run it. Together with the four cancelled Nearly New Sales in 2020-2021 this has once again had a significant negative impact on our financial situation.



Chocolate Workshop

PLANS FOR 2023: We had a pretty decent year of events, but would have wished for more interest and participation by our members. In 2023 we will try new things to see if that will attract more families participating in larger events. We will try to revive our Nearly New Sales in 2023 in the hope of finding enough volunteers to plan and run this popular event.

INFORMATION

In 2022, the Information Team had two dedicated members who checked emails daily and endeavoured to answer the queries of members and non-members alike. One of those team members took on the additional role of Talks Coordinator, whose role is to organise popular and varied talks and workshops for BCT members.

The Information Team continues to be the front desk of the BCT and the point of contact for newly arrived families as well as potential and even current members that have got specific queries.

EMAIL QUERIES

In 2022, the Information Team continued to answer a high number of email queries. Many queries came from non-members who were moving to Belgium or who were looking for advice regarding schools or healthcare for example. Many queries also came from non-members interested in attending playgroups or events at the Clubhouse or local group activities.

PHONE CALLS

The BCT phone line received 126 calls in 2022 compared to 15 calls in 2021. This increase could be explained by our switch from landline connection to a mobile phone number. However, queries by email are still the most used approach to contact the BCT. As in previous years, most calls came from non-members looking for practical information. These calls ranged from enquiries about membership, prenatal courses, playgroups, local groups, Clubhouse party rentals, BCT events, the Belgian medical system to offers of collaboration. All callers new to the BCT were informed about the full range of BCT services and encouraged to visit our website for further



TOP QUERIES

- Local Groups • Playgroups
- Childminders/crèches
- Gynaecologists/new pregnancy/ Prenatal Courses • Schools • Health care in general • Breastfeeding
- First Aid Classes & Clubhouse party rentals

information. As usual, we also received a few calls from people in need of a listening ear. At the end of such a call, we always signposted the caller towards additional sources of support, such as BCT local and Facebook groups, the Belgian Schools Network, embassies or the Community Help Service.

TALKS

Members continued to participate in a variety of interesting talks and workshops held at the Clubhouse or online.

We offered 7 face-to-face talks at the Clubhouse in 2022, on potty training, baby-led weaning, baby-wearing, family yoga and a style masterclass. We offered 9 talks to members via online webinars on mealtime dramas, multilingualism, estate planning, elimination communication and foods for hormonal balance in perimenopause. Talks were free for members and non-members were able to attend for a fee. Some of those non-members even joined the BCT.

In 2022, we offered online and in-person workshops, that are longer or even consist of several sessions and for which participants may pay a fee. Subjects were: Parenting with Positive Discipline, Sleep Consultations and job skills (personal branding), with the new additions of Floristry and Family Language Consultations. All of these will be reoffered in 2023.



Pilates

MEMBER COURSES

Since 2016 we have been offering BCT Members' Courses in partnership with some of our members who are qualified in areas that are of interest to our wider membership.

As with BCT talks and workshops, in 2022 members were happy to either continue following courses from home or in-person. Members regularly attended online Yoga (postnatal, bedtime) and online or in-person Pilates, art classes, postnatal exercise and baby massage classes. From the summer until late autumn, members enjoyed a new course - Nordic Walking in the Bois de la Cambre and from autumn, new online sessions of Fertility Yoga.



Painting Workshop

PLANS FOR 2023

A number of free online talks and in-person meetings are scheduled for 2023, including on mindfulness, weight loss, multilingualism, pensions transfers, job skills, postpartum recovery, elimination communication, self-care, stress management, family and toddler yoga.

We are urgently looking to recruit new information team members, as well as a Talks Coordinator and a Talks Host for the Clubhouse in 2023.

We continue to offer those talks, workshops and courses which have shown a consistent demand from members, notably Pilates, Baby Massage, Postnatal Exercise and Yoga. Return to work-related workshops, parenting skills, Nordic Walking and painting courses are also scheduled.



A BCT Talk at the Clubhouse

Feedback from members has been very positive. Participants have enjoyed learning and meeting like-minded people, both online and at the Clubhouse which provides excellent features like daylight, a large screen, flexible room settings, kitchenette etc and a welcoming atmosphere for these events.

COMMUNICATIONS

SMALL TALK: THE MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE

The new quarterly publishing schedule has been working well and is certainly less demanding for the team. The four issues in 2022 were carefully put together with a good eye for the needs and interests of our members. As in previous years, a wide range of topics relating to childbirth, parenting and family life were featured, providing relevant and valuable information and, at the same time, a voice was given to those members who were prepared to share their expertise and experiences with our membership. The increase in group activities became apparent in more group related pages as so many groups opened or revived their activities. The last three issues published big informative features to accompany the launch of our new app on Twizzit with practical information for members on how to navigate and make best use of our app.



The team consists of the editor plus two editorial assistants and five proof readers. The team is still looking for a new Display ads coordinator.

The liaison between volunteers and professional production companies and printers continues to work very well.

Display advertising has continued to be an important income stream for the BCT. Despite producing fewer issues per year the team managed to increase the advertising income per issue. Small Talk managed to keep the majority of its long-term advertisers and attracted some new ones. 36 adverts were processed and raised an income of 6,260 euros.

PUBLICITY AND PUBLICATIONS

Our **Facebook page** is an important publicity tool for the BCT. The number of followers has again increased to 4,500 at the end of the year. Several hundreds of posts and BCT events were placed on our Facebook page in 2022. In order to increase traffic on the page and to reach out to the wider expat online community the team regularly shares posts with Facebook expat groups in Belgium as well as our own Facebook groups. The BCT's **profiles on Instagram and Twitter** have also grown significantly. Both are less frequently but nevertheless regularly fed with content.

The launch of our new mobile friendly **website** in May was a huge and long overdue catch up with up-to-date technology. We can already see how much more it is being visited compared to our old website and that almost 80% of users access the website with a mobile device. Finally, the public, including potential members, get to navigate our website comfortably from whatever device they want, enabling them to explore the fresh, modern, clear and authentic virtual presence of the BCT. Apart from the design, we focussed on user friendliness to make membership sign-ups and course bookings as easy as possible. The blog feature on the website allows us to regularly publish relevant Small Talk articles and promote them via our Social Media channels to distribute the new content and increase website traffic and visibility. The website was structured, planned, designed and implemented by volunteers on a very small budget and we are proud of how it has turned out and how easy content update and maintenance is.

Prenatal courses flyer



Twizzit, initially introduced as a membership management system in April, turned out to be much more! It is also an easy to navigate and manage **communication platform**. BCT administration uses it for instance to send out president's letters, membership related communication and the weekly newsletter. Group organisers send out newsletters and event announcements to their groups via Twizzit and members can communicate with each other via the Live Feed feature in each event listing. We finally have an agenda that holds all our events, activities, courses and classes accessible for all our members any time. Twizzit is a boost for the internal BCT communication that helps to connect our groups and members with each other. The app version for mobile phones makes it handy to use and is again a catch up with up-to-date technology. We continue to support members and volunteers to use the app to its full potential with articles in Small Talk and video tutorials.

Additional projects the team worked on in 2022:

- BCT services and event listings were promoted throughout the year on important community and expatriate websites/message boards in Belgium.
- We continued to work on reciprocal online references with organisations and businesses in our field of activity in Belgium (for instance with Breastfriends Brussels and The Village.be).
- In early 2022 we created a **business profile on Google Maps** as an additional online presence which had 30,000 views by the end of the year.
- Participation in the Family Day event of the British School of Brussels and BCT info material was provided for an open day at another international school in Auderghem.
- About 100 **publicity packs** were prepared and distributed via the Pregnancy in Belgium sessions and by individual mailings.
- Cross-team support** was provided, e.g. production of the Annual Report 2021, President's presentation at the AGM 2022, design and reprint of pre- and postnatal services flyer, update and reprint of the Pregnancy in Belgium booklet, design of posters and onsite and online publicity support for all events and activities.
- In October we moved the **weekly newsletter** from MailChimp to Twizzit and re-launched it with a new design and structure. One advantage of using Twizzit as the newsletter platform is that events can be imported directly from the agenda into the newsletter and they include a link for sign-ups, details and registrations. It is now much easier and less time consuming to put together. The weekly newsletter is an important and appreciated tool for communication with our members. 39 weekly newsletters were sent out with an average opening rate of about 40%.

PLANS FOR 2023

We are planning to develop a concept for online advertisement opportunities on the website. We are looking at electronic options that could replace the BCT Book for newly joined members as we do not have the financial means to reprint this publication. Cutting costs in all areas will continue to determine all publicity activities. The publicity team still needs additional, active members in order to develop and implement some of the above mentioned plans and new projects to promote the BCT.



ONLINE MEDIA

Website @ Social Media

2022 WAS AN EXCITING YEAR FOR THE BCT: Not only did we get a new website, but we also introduced Twizzit, our new member management system.

WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION

Our new website www.bctbelgium.org was redeveloped by a small team of volunteers. We wanted to present the information about the BCT, our services and activities, our courses and classes, in a more appealing way. Rearranging the information in a way that is more intuitive as well as adding lots of photos has made it much easier for new and potential members to find what they are looking for. The majority of the photos used were taken at BCT playgroups and events, so visitors get a direct impression of what the BCT community is like.

TWIZZIT FOR COMMUNITY

Twizzit, our new membership management system, has become so much more than that. It allows members to get instant access to the BCT agenda, to sign up forms and their membership information. Joining the BCT or renewing the membership has never been easier. Members and non-members can use Twizzit to sign up for all BCT prenatal courses and classes and pay online using Bancontact. For those who do not have a Belgian account, an option to pay later via bank transfer is also available. Members can access Twizzit either through the BCT Twizzit app on their smartphones or via the Twizzit website. Twizzit saves our volunteers a lot of time and makes administrative work much easier and straightforward.

FACEBOOK FOR INTERACTION

The BCT Facebook page (www.facebook.com/bctbelgium) provides members and non-members alike with information we want to share about our organization and events but also about parenting in general with articles from around the web. In 2022, we saw another steady incline in numbers with **4,400 likes** and **4,500 followers**.



The BCT Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/BrusselsChildbirthTrust) is a community of BCT members and non-members that support each other on their journey through parenthood, with knowledge, lifehacks and encouragement.

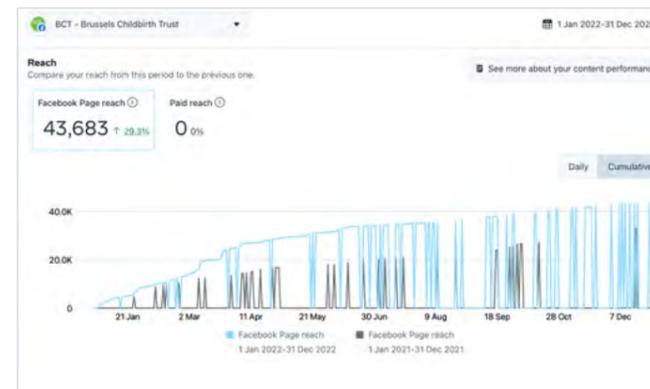
At the end of 2022, the main BCT Facebook group had almost **5,600 members**. Other BCT groups on Facebook bring together the members of our local, support and interest groups. The information shared in those groups is more targeted on certain areas or interests, so they complement our main group rather than compete with it.

ZOOM FOR ONLINE CLASSES

[License (US) Licence (UK)]

In 2022, the BCT purchased a second ZOOM license which allows us to organize overlapping prenatal courses. Since our Board of Directors has almost doubled its meetings, it is more convenient to do them via ZOOM as it allows board members to nurse their babies or be at home for their kids during meetings.

FACEBOOK COMPARISON 22-21



WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS IN 2022

Page title and screen class	Views	Users	Views per user	Average engagement time	Event count All events
The Brussels Childbirth Trust (BCT) - Brussels Childbirth Trust	16,238 (100% of total)	4,456 (100% of total)	3.64 Avg 0%	2m 03s Avg 0%	47,402 (100% of total)
1 Playgroups - Brussels Childbirth Trust	3,167	2,004	1.59	0m 40s	10,933
2 Birth & Parenting Courses - Brussels Childbirth Trust	1,119	678	1.65	1m 12s	2,891
3 Become a BCT member - Brussels Childbirth Trust	1,105	567	1.95	1m 44s	3,160
4 Join us - Brussels Childbirth Trust	828	472	1.75	0m 48s	1,937
5 First Aid for Parents - Brussels Childbirth Trust	739	535	1.38	0m 37s	2,166
6 Pregnancy in Belgium - Brussels Childbirth Trust	596	352	1.69	0m 57s	1,825
7 Local Groups - Brussels Childbirth Trust	545	321	1.70	0m 58s	1,540
8 Find us @ The Clubhouse - Brussels Childbirth Trust	541	376	1.44	0m 50s	1,463
9 Become a member - Brussels Childbirth Trust	537	370	1.45	0m 30s	1,457
10	529	327	1.62	0m 46s	1,353

INSTAGRAM TO SHOW THE BCT'S COLOURFUL SIDE

With all the playgroups and events happening at the Clubhouse and around Brussels, we could finally take up publishing photos about the BCT on our Instagram account [bctbelgium](https://www.instagram.com/bctbelgium) again! And it shows: at the end of 2022, we had one third more followers than at the end of 2021.

TWITTER TO CONNECT

When organizing our series of talks on Multilingualism, Twitter was an invaluable resource to reach out to experts in the field and to hear stories from multilingual families from around the world. [@BCTBelgium](https://twitter.com/BCTBelgium) also shares our "Around the web" articles about the many facets of parenting of different ages.

One of the main goals of the BCT has always been connecting people, providing them with a network. We are more than happy that we can do that both in real life and online, with the help of our website, the Facebook page and group, our Zoom account, Instagram and Twitter – and now also Twizzit.



BCT'S NEW WEBSITE

BOARD of DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



PRESIDENT
Louise Nugent
president@bctbelgium.org



PAST PRESIDENT
Sandra Drechsel
past-president@bctbelgium.org



VICE PRESIDENT
Emily Roelandts & Chiara Troisi
vice-president@bctbelgium.org



TREASURER
Natalja Guintsenberg
treasurer@bctbelgium.org

BOARD MEMBERS



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Mong-Tuyen Huynh
membership@bctbelgium.org



GROUP LEADER COORDINATOR
Chiara Troisi & Felicity Raikes
groups@bctbelgium.org



INFORMATION COORDINATOR
Alison Plater
info@bctbelgium.org



EVENTS COORDINATOR
Abigail Alfred
events@bctbelgium.org



COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Britta Appel
publications@bctbelgium.org



ONLINE MEDIA COORDINATOR
Sandra Drechsel
webmaster@bctbelgium.org



VOLUNTEERING COORDINATOR
Shelley O'Brien
volunteering@bctbelgium.org



PRENATAL SERVICES COORDINATOR
Jill Hawkes
prenatal-services@bctbelgium.org



POSTNATAL SERVICES COORDINATOR
Kirsten Nagle-Canton
postnatal-services@bctbelgium.org



FINANCES

The final accounts at the end of the year showed a loss of **€11.211** versus an expected loss of **€14.600**.

The main reasons, for the significantly (by **€3.389**) lower loss: The BCT started the swimming groups in Spring and we saw an increase in membership numbers.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM? WHAT IS IT SPENT ON?

The BCT's main **sources of income in 2022** are the membership fees, prenatal services, display advertisements in Small Talk magazine, events and donations.

The BCT generated revenue from membership fees of **€34.658**. This is more than the budget of **€30.000** and more than last year: (2021) of **€29.970**.

The income from prenatal services (prenatal courses, First Aid classes and 'Pregnancy in Belgium' classes) was **€32.570**. With significant expenses in this area of **€28.075**, the profit was **€4.495** which is more than last year: (2021) **€3.057**.

The display ad team generated income of **€6.260** which covers 46% of the costs related to the production, printing and distribution of the magazine. This income was more than the budget of **€5.500**, and less than last year: (2021) **€7.222**.

Although Nearly New Sales could not be organized, the events team generated an income of **€3.349** which was less than the budget of **€6.050** and less than last year: (2021) **€4.735**. Member courses and postnatal services generated a stable income of **€1.465** and **€520**, respectively.

The swimming groups brought in an additional **€9.465** to the BCT revenue. Related expenses for swimming pool and instructors in 2022 were **€6.964**.

On the **expenditure** side our premises and its maintenance are the biggest blocks amounting to **€41.329**. Last year (2021) it was **€30.173**. The Budget for 2022 was **€40.650**.

The BCT started to rent out the Clubhouse in 2021. In 2022 the generated income was **€8.100**, which covered 29% of the net rent paid in 2022 (**€27.720**).

The cost related to our prenatal services, mainly for teacher fees, were **€28.075**.

The IT cost of **€7.745** consist of investments in the new website and its maintenance, two Zoom subscriptions and the cost for our new membership management system Twizzit. While the website development was less expensive than budgeted (**€5.000**), additional expenses occurred by outsourcing our complex membership management system (**€4.813**).

Philippe Vandebek from Rudi Swings bvba, Boekhouding - Fiscaliteit has checked and approved the end of year statement closing 2022. →

FORWARD LOOK TO THE BUDGET 2023

The BCT does not intend to make a profit, but has accumulated profits over some years in the past. Unfortunately, 2023 started with a significant increase in electricity cost due to the energy crisis. This year another overspend of €21.420 is projected.

Most of our efforts will again be in the area of increasing our membership base further.

We hope to be able to offer more in-person (or hybrid) Prenatal courses again. Although the concept of offering online courses will stay part of our portfolio we are aiming to offer some of the sessions in the Clubhouse in order to boost prenatal services income and attract new members.

We will continue to rent the Clubhouse to members for private parties. This new initiative started promisingly and shows potential for development.

FINANCIAL REPORT (Actuals & Budget 2022, Actuals 2021, Budget 2023)

AREAS	2022 Actuals			2022 Budget			2021 Actuals			2023 Budget		
	INCOME ACTUALS	EXPENSES ACTUALS	RESULT	INCOME BUDGET	EXPENSES BUDGET	RESULT	INCOME ACTUALS	EXPENSES ACTUALS	RESULT	INCOME BUDGET	EXPENSES BUDGET	RESULT
1. membership	34.658	-1.841	32.817	30.000	-1.000	29.000	29.970	-921	29.049	34.000	-1.900	32.100
2. magazine	6.260	-13.500	-7.240	5.500	-13.100	-7.600	7.222	-15.197	-7.975	5.000	-13.500	-8.500
3. IT		-7.745	-7.745		-5.000	-5.000		-5.162	-5.162		-7.300	-7.300
4. publicity		-513	-513		-1.000	-1.000		-754	-754		-1.000	-1.000
5. premises	8.100	-41.329	-33.229	5.000	-40.650	-35.650	2.900	-30.173	-27.273	8.000	-45.920	-37.920
6. member courses & groups	10.930	-6.964	3.966	1.400	-300	1.100	1.429	-115	1.314	10.900	-7.300	3.600
7. board		-1.641	-1.641		-2.900	-2.900		-2.202	-2.202		-2.900	-2.900
8. prenatal support	32.570	-28.075	4.495	31.900	-28.200	3.700	30.125	-27.068	3.057	30.900	-28.550	2.350
9. postnatal support	520	-545	-25	400	-500	-100	300		300	600	-500	100
10. volunteers		-483	-483		-1.000	-1.000		-173	-173		-1.000	-1.000
11. funday/events	3.349	-3.354	-5	6.050	-3.800	2.250	4.735	-2.863	1.872	3.850	-4.500	-650
12. nearly new sales			0	19.000	-14.500	4.500			0	2.000	-500	1.500
13. bank charges/interest		-780	-780	100	-1.000	-900		-789	-789		-800	-800
14. paypal/POM		-958	-958		-1.000	-1.000		-873	-873		-1.000	-1.000
15. other/donations	130		130			0	3.515		3.515			0
Total	96.517	-107.728	-11.211	99.350	-113.950	-14.600	80.196	-86.290	-6.094	95.250	-116.670	-21.420

ACCOUNTS	01.01.2022	31.12.2022
PayPal	0,00	0,00
Membership	60.413,45	57.595,79
BNP bank accounts		
BE09 0019 0450 3757	977,12	3.361,67
BE24 0019 0494 8038	3.585,00	4.185,00
BE27 0019 0495 1573	0,00	0,00
BE70 0019 0495 6425	0,00	0,00
BE41 0343 1742 7310	55.851,33	50.049,12
BE75 3636 1476 7751	4.440,00	4.440,00
Total	64.853,45	62.035,79

After three years without a Nearly New Sale we are planning to hold an Autumn 'Nearly New Sale' in 2023.

We expect that income from the Display Advertising Team will still cover up to 30% of the costs related to the production, printing and distribution of Small Talk magazine.

Our new website and membership management system will make website navigation and online payments as well as internal

communication with members easier and we hope this will also have a positive effect on potential new members and course participants to join the BCT.

A big "thank you" needs to go out to the various volunteers who took on additional projects throughout the year and for each person who supported the BCT so generously with a donation.

BCT *at a* GLANCE

755

MEMBERS
*Current at time of printing

Here at the BCT we are all about family!

We are a volunteer-run not-for-profit social and support network for families and parents-to-be offering prenatal courses, postnatal services and a wide variety of activities and parenting resources in English. With currently **755 member families** from **70 nationalities** we are one of the largest international family communities in Belgium.

80 VOLUNTEERS *(and counting!)*

10 LOCAL, **16** INTEREST, **10** SUPPORT GROUPS

126 Phone Queries

140

families in our swimming groups

192

parents-to-be in prenatal courses

47,000

views on www.bctbelgium.org in 6 months

229

People attended the First Aid classes

5,600 MEMBERS IN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

11

Pregnancy in Belgium Evenings

17 Clubhouse Playgroups

30,000

42 CLUBHOUSE PARTY BOOKINGS

profile views on Google maps

Countless parent and baby meet-ups, park playdates, member course sessions, zoom meetings etc.



BrusselsChildbirthTrust (BCT)
asbl/VZW 466669572

Chaussée de Waterloo 620
1050 Ixelles, Belgium
0480 68 24 41

www.facebook.com/bctbelgium
www.bctbelgium.org
Follow us on Facebook @ Twitter: @bctbelgium

