

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021

I would like to present an overview of the Friends activities from the last AGM in February 2021 to November 2021.

Once again due to COVID-19, our activities were interrupted during the year with various restrictions and suspensions. At the moment we are doing most of our usual program with a few modifications.

Committee:

President: Anne Bridley

Vice-President: Delene Commerford

Secretary: Pam Sheean

Treasurer: Ann Clark

Minutes Secretary: Jan Bobbin

Growing Friends Nursery coordinator: Judy Milner

Growing Friends garden workers: Ann Clark

Dovyalis editors: Judy Milner and Delene Commerford

Other committee members: Lindy Sloan. Kirstie Paterson usually attended as a representative of the City of Greater Bendigo.

Committee meetings were held in February, March, April, May, July, September and October, some by zoom and some in person. In May it was decided that meetings could be held every 2 months to reduce the amount of work for the secretary unless a monthly meeting was needed to deal with business.

I would like to thank all our committee members for keeping the group going, especially while activities were suspended.

Growing Friends Nursery: organisers Judy Milner, assisted by Helen Gardam.

In April we had a very successful clearing out sale which raised over \$4000 and was attended by over 400 people. A sale of chrysanthemums for Mothers Day raised around \$1200. Sales have also taken place on Tuesday mornings at times and recently on Saturday mornings to cater for those unable to attend on a weekday. These sales have provided a steady income which will be used for the benefit of the gardens. Due to COVID uncertainties, and lack of stocks, we decided not to have our usual big sale in November this year.

Growing Friends Gardens: organized by Ann Clark and Kirstie Paterson.

This has had good attendance by our band of willing helpers in spite of the interruptions. Thanks to Judy, Helen, Ann and all the helpers from the Growing Friends for their work this year.

Botanical Illustrators: The illustrators have continued to meet when COVID restrictions have allowed. An exhibition of the Illustrators work was held at the St Arnaud Railway Hub in April with several works sold and interest generated regarding the group.

Guided Walks and Talks

These have been largely suspended during the year. Thanks to Judy, Annie and Kirstie for their contributions here.

Jane Cleary, our chief guide, has retired. I would like to give a special thanks to her for her many years of service to the Friends and to the Botanic Gardens as a guide, committee member and office holder and as one of the founding members of the Friends.

Kirstie Paterson has taken on the task of garden tours for the moment.

Dovyalis

Editors: Judy Milner and Delene Commerford.

One issue was produced this year, #13 in Autumn, with articles on the Eden project in Cornwall by Pam and Anthony Sheean and local geology by Eric Wilkinson.

Thanks again to our editors, proof readers and contributors for an excellent quality magazine.

FBBG excursions: none were held this year. We look forward to more garden visits in the coming year.

Grants and donations: we have made no donations to the gardens since the last AGM. Our reserves have now built up to the point where we are looking at where we can best put them to use in the gardens.

Central Hub: work has commenced on the Central Hub. A sod turning ceremony was held in July. The Hub will contain a new visitors centre and gardens, as well as underground water storage and filtration that will help clean up storm water run-off before it enters Bendigo Creek.

Web site

Lindy Sloan has been the driving force behind the Friends new website which is now up and running. Thanks to Lindy, Pam, Judy and Jan Bobbin for their work on this. Our new web site is a good way of promoting the Friends and informing the public of our activities. It can be found at www.friendsbgobg.org.au

Bendigo Botanic Gardens Staff: I would like to thank Kirstie and her staff for their continued hard work and enthusiasm. The gardens are now being visited more than ever by the public, and require a large amount of maintenance to keep up with the heavy usage.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the FBBG who have continued to support the gardens through their membership and work.

Anne Bridley
President
9/11/21