

Teena koutou katoa

Welcome, welcome, three times welcome to this AGM of Friends of Hamilton Gardens for 2025. Once again the year has been a busy one, with fundraising, events, behind-the-scenes tours, and some weather that could have been a bit less wet. Of course the latter is more likely to be the shape of things to come as far as the Met Service is concerned, with far more water in the air than at the end of the 20th century.

The Medieval Garden continues to progress at a steady pace, while fundraising is now under way for the Baroque Garden, being the next project in line: it promises to be a stunning addition to the Inner Gardens when completed, but like all the other gardens, it requires teamwork and funding to make it happen.

A huge vote of thanks is due to all our members who volunteer, whether helping in the Visitor Centre, potting up plants for the Propagation Group, lending some sweat-equity to events, maintaining the Membership database, or acting as Guides. Your time is valuable, and we greatly appreciate your sharing it, as do the Hamilton Gardens team. If anyone is wondering about how to get more involved as a volunteer, have a talk with Gail, who took over the role last year.

Once again we are proud to have supported the career development of two of the gardeners this year by way of small scholarships covering the cost of training outside the usual scope of things. We look forward to see how that translates into the Gardens themselves. It should be reiterated that the passion and commitment of the whole Hamilton Gardens team are collectively what makes the Gardens Experience what it is, aided and supported by our own volunteers.

The updating of our Constitution has come to the sharp end of the spade, with all the work done to meet current legal requirements: all we need to do now is pass them at this meeting, and they can be lodged. A lot of thanks due to the small team involved in this not-terribly-glamorous side of work behind the curtain.

Looking to the future, as always, we can now start to focus on the next project, and the next, and the next ad infinitum. Here's to a successful year ahead as Friends of Hamilton Gardens continue to be a part of something stunning and utterly unique, both in New Zealand, and the world at large.