



16th May 2019

Greytown Trustlands
89 Main Street
Greytown

RE: Open Letter to the Public Meeting

To the Board of the Greytown Trustlands Trust,

Greytown Primary School Board of Trustees would like to outline our position on the potential future allocation of funding from Greytown Trust Lands Trust.

For many years, we have received funding from the Greytown Trust Lands Trust. We would take this opportunity to very sincerely express our gratitude for this.

These funds are fundamental to our ability to provide a quality educational experience for our children in Greytown. An education that enables us to deliver on our core values. Values that set us apart and make us a very special and respected school.

The funds we receive are particularly valuable since Greytown's government funding was reduced following the most recently published census when we moved from Decile 6 to Decile 8. As many knows, decile ratings are related to the socio-economic status of its community. The theory being that more "affluent" communities can raise more funds. While the system is being reviewed by this Government, we can assure you our funding will certainly not increase.

We recognise that families and whanau are financially stretched and busier than ever, and the altruism of those able to contribute more is stretched thinly across the demands of many other worthwhile social, health and wellbeing initiatives. Again, we commend the generosity of many in our community.

We are deeply concerned about Greytown Trust Lands Trust's potential allocation on several fronts. Greytown School will definitely be adversely affected by the potential allocation. A reduction in funding from both Government and the Trust will lead to increasing pressure on our families and whanau and our ability to maintain the school's offering as it stands.

We have benefited from Trust funding in recent years and been able to provide such offerings, for example:

- Laptops and technology in classrooms
- Robotics and coding resources

Application of funds to these areas has enabled Greytown to be at the forefront of technology in schools and to keep right up to date with the fast-moving and essential world of technology. It has enabled us to provide quality devices for our children to date, rather than requiring to Bring Your Own Device.

We start our response by referring back to the Trust's mission – *"to make the community strong, cohesive, vibrant and progressive"*. We refer to the Greytown District Trust Lands Act 1979 that states the purpose of the trust is:

(a) *establishing, assisting in the establishment of, or generally assisting, educational facilities (including libraries) in the district:*

(b) *promoting and fostering in the district, or among persons who are, or who at some time have been, resident in the district, education generally, including (but not by way of limitation)—*

(i) *the cultivation of; and*

(ii) *the imparting of knowledge, proficiency, and skill in—
arts, science, technical subjects, literature, physical welfare, and other
cultural purposes:*

(c) *for the purposes of public utility and for the purpose of maintaining and promoting in the district the general well-being of the public.*

We believe education is pivotal and dominant in this legislation and the focus on education *must* be revisited and strengthened in practice. We have felt this should occur, even prior to this new allocation issue being raised. The pendulum seems to be swinging away from education.

We are a school with a roll that fluctuates between 360 and 400 annually, with 242 families currently. This is a large roll and is only going to grow more. We really value the Trust's contribution most sincerely.

We will outline our concerns about the allocation first, then raise a couple of issues we think are pertinent.

Allocation concerns

Our key concern about the potential allocation is obviously the reduction in funding to Greytown School:

- That is a reduction of 20 percent of actual cash benefit and the direct impact such a cut will have on our continued ability to provide the very best education for our children.

Our next concern is the inequity of this reduction:

- A 20 percent reduction from 2018 to 2021 for Greytown School, but just 8 percent for the Rugby Club (albeit a non-cash benefit), with 2021 allocations of \$24,000 cash for our school and \$68,000 non-cash benefit for the Rugby Club. That is a drop to the school of \$8177 and an increase to Rugby of \$27,075.

Our third concern is the inequity across sporting codes:

- A staggering and inexplicable difference by 2021 that would see the Rugby Club and Bowling Club receive some \$90,000 benefit against just \$20,000 to stretch across at least 12 other sporting codes.

Our position is that our young people must be encouraged to participate in *any* sport. No one sport should be singled out as more important than another. This is divisive and detrimental to all sports and thereby the children's health and wellbeing.

While some may say that a non-cash benefit is not real cash, what it represents is an actual real reduction in real cash earnings to the trust and therefore a real-time reduction in cash available for disbursement across the community.

Finally, our final concern is the vast inequity across sport, education and social, cultural and environmental needs:

- Just \$97,000 cash for education to be shared across a number of schools and worthwhile education investments, while sport receives the afore-mentioned \$156,000 non-cash benefit, with the majority of the allocation going to the rugby and bowling clubs.

We consider ourselves a progressive and forward-thinking school and are concerned that this imbalance is not widely enough recognised.

We are concerned that there are valid solutions being offered, for example, integration into the proposed Greytown Sports Hub, that have been publicly rejected.

Sports Hubs

We would like to take this opportunity to express our wholehearted support for the endeavours to establish and build a Sports Hub in Greytown. We consider the initiative to be forward thinking and enlightened. While outside of the "allocation issue", it is seriously intertwined and warrants some discussion.

Sports Hubs are the way of the future for the sport both in New Zealand and overseas. Internationally, their establishment has been most successful and in New Zealand, many local governments and communities are endeavouring to set them up or have already done so. Fraser Park Sportsville in Lower Hutt is an excellent example of such collaboration.

Not only do sports hubs achieve efficiencies in costs, through shared facilities and administration, but they have the potential to draw communities together in modern, well-planned and cohesive environments, increase participation through attractive facilities and reduction in costs to participants. Sporting codes need not to compete for participants, rather, they should support one another.

A new sports hub for Greytown, we believe, would increase our vibrancy, appeal and success. It would be great for our town. The opportunities a new sporting hub would present our community are limited only by our own imaginations.

We firmly believe sport must be cohesive and inclusive - not divisive

In short, we must take care that we do not become backwards and out-of-date, recognise that the rest of the country and world is becoming hub-oriented and that both existing and new residents are attracted by the best sporting and leisure facilities possible and moreover, forward-looking communities.

Coordination, cooperation and local government

We have prepared our response based on information provided by the Trust and by comments made publicly by others.

We would take this opportunity to seek amicable solutions to these issues. They are significant issues that need well thought out and long-term solutions.

We hope that solutions will be found through constructive discussion between all parties, rather than public discussion via the media.

Secondly, we would ask where the South Wairarapa District Council stands on these issues. Their public silence on this public dispute is surprising, in particular from our locally elected representatives. We would ask them what resourcing they apply to sports facilities in Greytown compared to the other communities in the district? We also ask whether they are in a position to make a genuine commitment to supporting the Hub venture which could help free up funding for our school and help resolve this brewing issue.

Perhaps the Trust could advise us of the level of engagement you have had with Council to date, and encourage responses from them on these questions.

Finally

To wrap up, at this point we reiterate that the issue has been brought to a head by the Greytown Trust Lands Trust's long term sustainability and the need to take definitive and assertive action over inequitable allocation of their funds, in line with their Trust Deed, and we believe this is just one the issues at hand that must be resolved.

Where is the long-term sustainability of a Trust that was established for the benefit of all of our residents, becoming beholden by one or two sporting clubs, especially when education is specifically defined in the Trust Act?

Our firm view of our town is that there is one sure thing about the future – our town will not stand still, things must progress. We need to recognise that growth is good. Stagnation in the past is not stimulating or inspiring, particularly for our young people – it will simply take us backwards, away from the vibrant, progressive and cohesive town the Trust states it wishes to achieve.

Greytown School is all about progressing our children. We would ask, which is more important for our young people – “preservation of history or a progressive future for all”?

Yours sincerely



Alistair Plimmer (Board Chairperson)
on behalf of the Greytown School Board of Trustees.