



## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

**Keeping the learner at the centre of our decision-making**

Meal - 6.00pm - In the Staffroom

Meeting - **6.30pm - In the Staffroom**

Present: Tony N, Tony C, Abi, Fiona, Jennie, Earle, Jacki, Mel, Ruth, Dave

Matt sends his apologies

Tony N to chair the meeting until the election

As per prior emails Earle wonders if it is appropriate that Matt has assigned Tony N to chair this meeting. Matt is currently the presiding member until the election occurs. Seeing Tony N has previous experience in this regard and Matt has asked him to, this decision makes sense. It was decided that since this was approved by other members when Matt proposed this, that Tony N would continue.

Welcome/Karakia (All say together)

Conflicts of Interest

Adding in that Jennie has got children at the school

No other new conflicts of interest

PB4L Meeting Matrix (Presiding Member)

BoT Code of Conduct (Presiding Member)

Now is the time to review these documents and ensure they are still fit for purpose.

Jennie will need to sign Code of Conduct.

Action Register (Presiding Member)

Correspondence (Presiding Member)

H&S Register

Nothing new, up to date

There are no meeting minutes for certain committees and so these minutes need to be kept up to date. Some documents such as the HNS calendar are a better measure for what has been happening.

Comments on H&S will be made on this document from now on.

Minutes of the previous meeting (Presiding Member)

Tony C moves, Abi seconds, all in favour

Tony N comments that for any changes to minutes get in touch with Mel. For any comments you can use the doc "comment" feature. Any other documents just add comments straight into the body of the document.





## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



Wednesday 21st September 2022

Remarks on Dave leaving the board:

Dave has been a huge asset to the board and has been a big help due to his accounting skills and expertise. Finance is a key part of the school and Dave has been a huge help in this regard. Dave was voted in in 2017 and has always been a huge help for new board members and explaining accounting in a way everyone could understand.

He has always shown a huge commitment to the school in regards to time spent in meetings and travel time. Thanks to Dave, the school is in a much better financial position now. Thank you very much Dave.

### Items to share:

- Good News Stories (Abi)

Teams have been doing a great job managing with absences. Children have still been able to move forward academically, programmes such as intervention enquiry etc have still been carried out successfully. This is a testament to our amazing staff and children at the school.

Some highlights include:

Year 4 camp - we are looking forward to year 3 camp

X country - Great to have a whole school event and we received very positive feedback from the school community.

Celebration of learning was very successful.

The school has made every effort to enrich experiences for all students.

Special mention was made of Ruth Taylor efforts to save the interschool athletics. With Hibiscus Coast Athletics no longer in operation the event was to be cancelled until Ruth stepped in and now the event will be run at AUT Millennium in Mairangi Bay with Gulf Harbour School being the hosts and main organisers.

- General comments/Finance comments (Mel)

### Items to discuss:

- Matrix Feedback (Tony N)

We are looking for skills averages to be above a 3.

There are major concerns around finance and accounting.

We have always had a lawyer involved previously and now this could be an issue of high concern.

We are allowed to co-opt people onto the board and so someone with expertise in law and accounting could be incredibly helpful.





## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

It would be good if board members could think about and talk to people who would be suitable candidates to fill these gaps.

Earle asks if we should give the board some time to settle. Would it perhaps be good to co-opt someone into a subcommittee rather than as a fully fledged board member. It could be a step too far to go straight from an election to co-opting people onto the board.

Tony says it is at this point in time when co-opting would usually occur. People don't tend to undersell their accounting skills and if you are a lawyer you are one. Therefore we have some obvious gaps here which we need to move quickly to fill.

Earle would just like to be mindful of those who had put themselves forward for election. Tony says these will be the first people we look at.

Abi adds that having someone on the board rather than just a committee could be good as they will be able to add insight to the bigger picture. Having their opinion in general conversation is very helpful. We have definitely seen this with Dave on the board as he has made excellent contributions at board meetings where an accountant's opinion was required.

Mel says there is a timeline as the budget for 2023 is being put together soon. It would be great to have a financial expert to help with this. A delayed election has forced us into this position. Budget needs to be presented to the board within the next meeting.

Tony says this is a very transparent process and is very open to the community. If people have the skills we need, that is all we are looking for.

Everyone is in favour of looking to co-opt around 2 members with the required skills. We are giving ourselves 3 weeks.

We will go to everyone who nominated themselves first. Once we have nominations from this group, the Board will make a decision on who is co-opted to fill the Accounting and Finance gap. Tony says once you decide to co-opt, the board can decide how this process is run.

All voted in favour of going to the people who nominated themselves first to see if anyone would meet the criteria.

Jennie adds that she noticed there weren't any lawyers who put themselves forward in the election. With this in mind, how we go about getting people with financial expertise within these people and then out sourcing for those with legal expertise. - Tony says accounting is more important for now, legal can be sorted later.





## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

- Induction Process (Earle)

Earle considers this a pretty standard document which should be helpful for all new board members.

Tony N says well done, overall a really good document.

A few small changes could be thought about:

Maybe the order of the complaints process and then the PTA meeting could be changed so that the PTA meeting comes second. Fiona amended.

Hautu introduction could be moved up higher in terms of order of importance. - Fiona has moved this to within 3 months of joining the board .

Mel asks who is going to organise these steps when a new member has joined?

Earle says there is a joint responsibility shared by the new member and the existing board. Support should be higher at the start and as the new member becomes more versed in the workings of the board the responsibility shifts more to them.

A mentor could be a good idea in order to help the person. This would be an existing board member, perhaps not the presiding member or Mel.

A mentor is there to help to make the process easier to follow.

Abi points out the need for clarity in where the responsibilities lies. It was agreed that the new member will be responsible for asking for help, especially from their mentor and other Board members.

The welcome pack will be online, with the Board website updated.

New induction process vote:

Tony N Moves, Tony C seconds, all in favour



## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees

Wednesday 21st September 2022

- [Board Ways of Working](#) (Earle)

Earle would like to make sure we are following workings properly to ensure we aren't invalidating conversations in the future. Earle feels we currently have more of an executive presiding member and we should have a more democratic set up. We should elect a presiding member and this member should have no more power than just chairing the meeting.

Tony says he is not sure about the extra powers referred to and this could be a significant move away from the current procedures that have served the school well.

Earle says that it would be in line with NZSTA that the presiding member has no more power than any other member. We need to be more clear cut on what powers the presiding member has.

Abi asks if Earle wants to re-delegate what powers the presiding member has. - It would be good to run through the definition of the presiding member and their powers.

Mel says the presiding member does have a different role than the rest of the board. It makes fast decision making easier at times. However it is very uncommon for the presiding member to have more power, only on a handful of occasions has this been evident.

Tony says there are policies from NZSTA on delegated authority and these are what we have used.

Mel says she can't think of a significant decision just having been made by the presiding member. There was one time where this occurred due to significant time pressure and this was minuted and agreed upon. If this had not have happened a decision would not have been made fast enough.

On other occasions when a decision has been made by Mel / SLT, the presiding member has been made aware they have not had a say in this decision. In the future perhaps the communication to the rest of the board could be improved.

Earle would like the board to operate in a more inclusive way. For example, when the agenda is set this could be a more inclusive collaborative process. The role and scope of the presiding member could be better defined.

Tony says, as the presiding member you don't have any sort of delegated authority over the rest of the board. Perhaps there could be better communication to the board, after decisions, setting the agenda.

But trying to change powers of the presiding member could cause some unintended issues. The school is running well as is and voting in a presiding member is just something we have to do.



## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees

**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

Earle says after an election we should discuss and confirm the delegated roles of the presiding member.

This will be a key point on the agenda of the next meeting.

Earle says he is happy to put this on the agenda of the next meeting as something to further discuss then.

This document will be gone through in detail at the next board meeting. This needs to be done in person and will consume a significant amount of time.

Everyone is in agreement that this should happen.

- Observations of Current Board Conflict (Fiona/Dave)  
[Governance-Support-Resources-Review-of-effective-governance-board-self-assessment-checklist.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Fiona thinks the communication and discussion around this document was flawed.

After the sharing of the document created by a committee there were email communications which were not very respectful or appropriate.

Dave has been reflecting on the role of the BoT, GHS deserves the best from everyone and treating each other with respect is crucial. There is obvious tension within the board which needs to be sorted out. The board needs to work as a team and at the moment it doesn't feel like it.

Dave delivers farewell address to the Board:

*While I'm no longer being a board member but still, maybe only for another few days, being copied into the board communications, it has given me an opportunity to reflect. I would like to share this reflection and I ask that you listen generously to what I have to say.*

*What is the role of a trustee – it is to oversee the governance of the school, to, at a high level, ensure that the school is focused on doing the right things at the right time. The board should be working in support of the management and if it is successful and lucky, the board should be largely invisible to the wider community.*

*When I think of the responsibilities that come with being a board member, the fiduciary duties, it is to put the school's needs above that of your own. It is the acknowledgement that the responsibility is to each of the children, each member of staff, the senior leadership team, the wider community. And to each other.*

*Part of the responsibility to each other is how the members interact with each other. How we engage with each other. How we speak to each other. It means not letting our egos get*



## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees

**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

*in the way of our obligations. It means that while we should debate ideas vigorously, we should do so with grace. We should listen to understand, not to seek points for rebuttal. Most of all, we should act in accordance with the Board's code of conduct, the School's values and above all else, come from a place of respect.*

*When I look at the communication that has occurred over the last week or so, I'm not sure that it meets these criteria.*

*I don't bring this up to point fingers or lay blame. I do so because the first step in resolving a problem is acknowledging that one exists. I'm not the right person to be suggesting the cure for this problem, nor would it be appropriate to delve into the details in the absence of Matt.*

*While there might be some mental justification or finger pointing going on in your respective heads, or perhaps even some resentment for the message, I would like you to do your best to put that to one side for a moment, as I'm now getting to the crux of my message. And it is this:*

*A fish rots from the head down. Gulf harbour has a growing roll, fantastic facilities, an enviable financial position, engaged staff, competent and passionate leadership team – all of the ingredients to be a top school. As someone who is now on the outside, when I look as objectively as I can, it strikes me that the greatest risk that the school faces at present is a board that doesn't work effectively, that squabbles, that doesn't focus on its responsibilities.*

*So I ask 2 things of each of you. Firstly, to understand and remember why you are here – you are here to assist with governance of the school. Secondly, to acknowledge that there might be a problem and for those who have served on the board prior to the recent election, to take some ownership of that problem. The first step in resolving any issue is realising and acknowledging its existence.*

*It is my hope that I am just catastrophising. But the community, the children who come to learn, the teachers who have chosen here to ply their skills, the management who pour their heart and soul, they deserve more than my hope. They deserve the best that each of you have to offer.*

Tony N says we need to get to know each other and work better together, maybe some sort of team building day. Tony N moves, Tony C seconds, all in favour of this.

Dave says the board is here to help the running with the school not to cause a distraction to the SLT.

Jacki says this has been taking SLT away from a full on job, it leaves a bad taste and is very demoralising.

Dave says that we are getting bogged down in the minor details and effectively arguing about similar standpoints.



*'Be the difference to ourselves, others and the world'*



## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees

Wednesday 21st September 2022

Earle feels that the board is not receptive to new ideas and sees them as a threat.

Dave says he found the opposite and had a different experience in joining the board. Due to everyone having varying opinions and stand points, it is good to get an external facilitator in to try and solve this issue and get to the root cause of this.

Mel says the document felt like a personal dig. The job is so busy as is and getting caught up in minor gripes is a very frustrating position to be in. Both Matt and Tony N feel this was a dig at them as well. Mel says she doesn't feel as though it was the voice of the entire committee.

Mel says this stems from the fact that she doesn't feel respected by Earle. Mel feels as though this would not be the case if she were a man and that the lack of respect is to do with her being a woman.

There have been numerous times since Earle has been on the Board that he has not acknowledged Mel, even when Mel has given a friendly hello in passing.

Earle says he doesn't ignore people based on their gender. He treats people equally. The list is not a list of Earle's gripes and it is not just a list made up by himself. It is important to note that this document was created by a committee and not just Earle himself.

It was never focussed on individuals, it was looking at processes and the way things work. Earle says he has no criticism of the way Mel runs the school. He says he respects her within the position she is in at the school. He does however as a parent have issues with Mel that he is not willing to raise today.

Mel feels like she is being blanked over and over again and does not feel respected.

Earle says he has to acknowledge Mel's opinion and this has nothing to do with her gender. There is the perception that Earle has had the sole responsibility of making this document which is not true.

Ruth would like to add that the lack of acknowledgment does not feel nice and feels like there is a disconnect between Earle and the SLT. She said she has personal experience of being ignored by Earle.

This can and has caused things to fester and which has started to form a negative impression.

In order to work well together we need to be at ease with each other.

Tony C would like to add that in the creation of this document, names were never mentioned and this was never meant to be an attack on anyone. It was based on the process of the board and how things had been gone about recently.

Dave ponders if the root cause of this comes from a group of people who are just not working well together. Unless everyone accepts this needs to be fixed this won't change.



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## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



Wednesday 21st September 2022

Tony N says we all have different perceptions around this which have been formed. Despite differing opinions the one thing that is clear is that the board is not working well together.

In the short term, let's treat each other with respect over email. Make sure to acknowledge each other and say hello when we see each other. Whatever your own perception is, is your own reality. We all need to accept things from each other and try to move forward with things.

In the long term a team building day needs to happen.

This is something for the next presiding member and Mel to sort in the future and then to organise a date.

- Appointing Presiding Member (Vote)

Tony has put in an email how this works. Mel and Abi are the only two individuals who can't be the next presiding member.

It is ok not to vote.

Matt has said that he doesn't want to be the presiding member anymore due to work commitments. He has nominated Tony N which Mel supports.

You can nominate yourself and vote for yourself

Tony C was nominated by Earle.

**After voting, our presiding member until Feb when elections will be held again, will be Tony N. Tony N nominates Tony C as deputy chair, all in favour.**

- Trustee Election Process Feedback (Earle)

Earle - The next time we go to election, all information should go out at the same time. This will make the process more clear for all people nominating themselves so they can prepare accordingly.

Dave says that it was not expected that so many people would put their names forward. This is why we needed to change the way we organised the election process.

Earle says there should be real transparency with how everything works. The position should be accessible for all individuals. There should be simple and clear protocols.

We don't add any information from the ministry protocols and information. We can add photo information as desired.





## Meeting of the Gulf Harbour School Board of Trustees



**Wednesday 21st September 2022**

In the future more clarity will be given for those putting themselves forward to be board members.

- Strategic Planning set BoT Date (1.5/2 hrs needed - GHCC after school) 25/26/27th Oct??

Earlier in the day would work better but is subject to change for what works for people. Not the 27th.

25th October works for everyone and is locked in 4.00pm

- Date for staff xmas do - Nov 17th, 6.30pm at Due Amici  
RSVP with Mel as soon as possible. No partners.

### **Agenda for the next meeting**

[Karakia](#)/ Closure

**End time** 8.40 pm

