Training Unit Visiting Committee

Annual Report 2013

First meeting of 2013 was held on Thursday 10th January, 2013. Governor was very pleased about success of Christmas temporary release as all prisoners had returned to Training Unit on time.

Any inmates request to see the visiting committee was granted.

As a result of a European Law Directive, methadone was now being introduced into open prisons i.e. Shelton Abbey Place of Detention, Loughan House Place of Detention and in a matter of 2 / 3 months would be introduced into Training Unit. All committee members expressed grave concern. Further unease was expressed when on research carried out by committee it was discovered that methadone is more addictive that heroin. However, as directive was legally binding committee had no further powers. Methadone introduced to Training Unit early summer is working successfully so far.

Prison library is very well stocked and running very efficiently overseen by inmates with a love of books and literature, daily newspapers are on hand, also coffee machine and it is widely and frequently utilised by the prisoners. Opening hours had also been extended.

Committee visited Shelton Abbey Place of Detention in April and were welcomed by Governor Conan Healy and staff. Some members had visited previously.

Very impressive location and wonderful work carried out there. Governor Healy took committee on extensive tour of grounds and farmlands. It was a very worthwhile visit.

The Red Cross initiative was outlined by head teacher – Ms. Joyce. It was proving to be very successful and popular with some prisoners. Governor Garland informed committee that the prison service had won a National Training Award. This award is much sought after, as Irish Prison Service would be competing against many major outside companies.

Chairperson requested that the committee be kept advised of any further events as some members would wish to attend.

In September 2013

Visiting committee attended IPS Training Day for all visiting committees in Brian Stack House, Portlaoise. It was a very worthwhile experience. Committee were also able to exchange ideas and meet other visiting committee members. Further training day scheduled to take place on 27th March, 2014 at the same location.

Closure of workshops in Unit during summer months is a concern. Two committee members on unannounced visits noted that during their "walk around" the prison they had seen the lack of motivational activity among prisoners. On enquiry, they were advised that workshops are closed over summer for 8 / 10 weeks. This matter to be taken up with the IPS at a future date.

Following on from above, Head of Educational Unit at Training Unit, Ms Joyce and her assistant teacher gave a detailed presentation to committee members of the educational facilities available at the prison at a monthly meeting in autumn.

A new industrial skills workshop offering picture framing facilities is now operating very successfully at Training Unit.

Concern was expressed by a committee member that on recent retirement of Chaplain, Sr. Mairéad Gahan, no replacement had been appointed. Governor assured committee that prisoner's spiritual needs were catered for at all times.

Committee wish to thank Governor and staff for their courtesy and cooperation. Unit is extremely well run – kitchen is a constant source of excellent and varied choices and individual dietary requirements of all prisoners are taken into consideration.

Committee look forward to working with staff in 2014 for the benefit / rehabilitation of all prisoners.

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Deirdre Kenneally (Chairperson)

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Sadie Jordan

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Fintan Kelly

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Patrick N. Turley

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Patrick Holton

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Anne Confrey

Coiste Cuairte an Aonaid Oiliúna

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2013

Tionóladh an chéad chruinniú den bhliain Déardaoin an 10 Eanáir 2013. Bhí an Gobharnóir an-sásta faoin rath a bhí ar scaoileadh sealadach na Nollag toisc gur fhill gach príosúnach ar ais ar an Aonad Oiliúna in am.

Deonaíodh gach iarratas a rinne príosúnaigh chun bualadh leis an gcoiste cuairte.

Mar thoradh ar Threoir Dhlí na hEorpa, bhíodh meatadón á thabhairt isteach i bpríosúin oscailte, i.e. Ionad Coinneála Theach na gCanónach, Ionad Coinneála Theach an Locháin, agus bheadh sé á thabhairt isteach san Aonad Oiliúna i gceann 2 / 3 mhí. Chuir gach ball den choiste imní mhór in iúl ina leith sin. Cuireadh tuilleadh anacra in iúl tar éis don choiste taighde a dhéanamh ar an gceist – taighde ina bhfuarthas amach go bhfuil meatadón níos andúile ná hearóin. Mar sin féin, toisc gur ceangailteach ó thaobh dlí atá an treoir, níl aon chumhacht ag an gcoiste ina leith. Go dtí seo, tá ag éirí leis an bpróiseas meatadóin a tugadh isteach san Aonad Oiliúna go luath sa samhradh.

Is iomaí acmhainn atá i leabharlann an phríosúin agus bíonn sé á reáchtáil go han-éifeachtúil ag príosúnaigh a bhfuil spéis mhór acu i leabhair agus sa litríocht. Bíonn nuachtáin laethúil agus meaisín caife ar fáil. Bíonn an-tóir ar an leabharlann i measc na bpríosúnach. Fadaíodh le huaireanta oscailte na leabharlainne freisin.

Thug an Coiste cuairt ar Ionad Coinneála Theach na gCanónach agus fuair siad fáilte ón nGobharnóir Conan Healy agus ón bhfoireann fáilte. Thug roinnt ball den Choiste cuairt ar an Ionad roimhe sin. Is áit fhíormhaith é agus bíonn obair den scoth á déanamh ann. Thug an Gobharnóir Healy turas fairsing don choiste ar thailte agus ar fheirmthailte an phríosúin. Cuairt an-fhiúntach ba ea í.

Thug Ms. Joyce, an príomh-mhúinteoir, eolas dúinn faoi thionscnamh na Croise Deirge. Bíonn ag éirí go maith leis an tionscnamh agus glacann roinnt príosúnach páirt ann. Chuir an Gobharnóir Garland in iúl don choiste gur bhuaigh an tseirbhís phríosúin Dámhachtain Náisiúnta Oiliúna. Bíonn an-tóir ar an dámhachtain sin, toisc go mbíonn Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann san iomaíocht le mórchuideachtaí ar an taobh amuigh ina leith.

D'iarr an cathaoirleach go gcoinneofaí an coiste ar an eolas faoi aon imeachtaí eile toisc go mbeadh roinnt ball ag iarraidh freastal iontu.

I mí Mheán Fómhair 2013

D'fhreastail an coiste cuairte ar Lá Oiliúna Sheirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann i dTeach Brian Stack, Port Laoise. Eispéireas an-fhiúntach a bhí ann. Bhí an coiste in ann smaointe a mhalartú agus teacht le chéile le baill de choistí cuairte eile. Tá lá oiliúna eile le bheith ar siúl an 27 Márta 2014 san áit chéanna.

Is ábhar imní é dúnadh cheardlanna an Aonaid le linn míonna samhraidh. Thug beirt bhall den choiste faoi deara le linn dóibh "siúl timpeall" ar an bpríosún go raibh easpa gníomhaíocht inspreagtha i measc na bpríosúnach. Tar éis dóibh é sin a fhiosrú,

dúradh leo go mbíonn ceardlanna dúnta ar feadh 8 / 10 seachtaine le linn an tsamhraidh. Pléifear an t-ábhar sin níos déanaí le Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann.

Ina dhiaidh sin, ba ag cruinniú míosúil san fhómhar thug Ms Joyce, Ceann an Aonaid Oideachais san Aonad Oiliúna, in éineacht lena múinteoir cúnta, cur i láthair mionsonraithe do bhaill den choiste maidir leis na háiseanna oideachais atá ar fáil ag an bpríosún.

Tá ceardlann nua i scileanna tionsclaíocha ar siúl san Aonad Oiliúna faoi láthair, rud ina dtugtar áiseanna frámála pictiúr.

Chuir ball den choiste imní in iúl nár ceapadh aon duine in áit an tséiplínigh, an tSiúr Mairéad Gahan, tar éis di dul ar scor le déanaí. Dhearbhaigh an Gobharnóir don choiste go mbítear ag freastal ar riachtanais eaglasta na bpríosúnach i gcónaí.

Is mian leis an gcoiste buíochas a ghabháil leis an nGobharnóir agus leis an bhfoireann as an gcúirtéis agus as an gcomhoibriú a thug siad. Bíonn an t-aonad á reáchtáil go fíormhaith – bíonn roghanna éagsúla den scoth le fáil sa chistin agus cuirtear riachtanais chothaithe ar leith na bpríosúnach go léir san áireamh.

Tá an coiste ag tnúth le bheith ag obair leis an bhfoireann sa bhliain 2014 ar mhaithe le leas / athshlánú na bpríosúnach uile.