

## **VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

**Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee have pleasure in presenting their report for the year 2010.**

The Visiting Committee played an active role in the life of the Centre and met on 12 occasions during the course of the year under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pat Fitzgerald. Members were facilitated in regard to their meetings and regular visits. Offenders made requests to see the Visiting Committee during the course of the year.

The annual Visiting Committee Variety Concert was cancelled in December a revamped concert is proposed for 2011.

### **Regime Services to Offenders**

#### **Addiction Counsellor**

The counsellor continues to prove highly effective in terms of linking in with offenders who are committed here with Addiction issues.

#### **Catering**

Training continued for both our Catering staff and offenders. A total of 13 offenders were employed daily in our kitchen and were heavily involved in food preparation, records, cleaning, serving etc. An external audit of our catering services was carried out in July and a very positive result was attained in that the Kitchen retained its Q Mark status.

#### **Chaplaincy**

Spiritual Care to offenders during the year was provided by Sr Pat Egan, who attended the Centre for 3 days per week in addition to Sunday mornings. Sunday Service was facilitated by Fr Crossan.

#### **Bothar Project**

This is a resounding success here in Shelton, 27 in Calf heifers left Shelton to go to Rwanda at the end of October, following a very successful open Day held on Monday 4th October 2010 when the families of the donors were invited to Shelton Abbey to view their heifers prior to departure Rwanda. The Director General Mr Brian Purcell also addressed the gathering praising the Governor, Staff and offenders for all their hard work. There was a presentation from Governor Lawton, Mr Peter Irton Botháir. The Bothar organisation also placed their goats in our care for the quarantine period in November. These 300 goats provided a number of opportunities for us, particularly in the area of employment of offenders, the Goats are to go to Rwanda in early Jan 2011. The costs of keeping them were met by the Bothar organisation. This partnership with Bothar has continued to grow and is a welcome addition to activities here in Shelton Abbey.

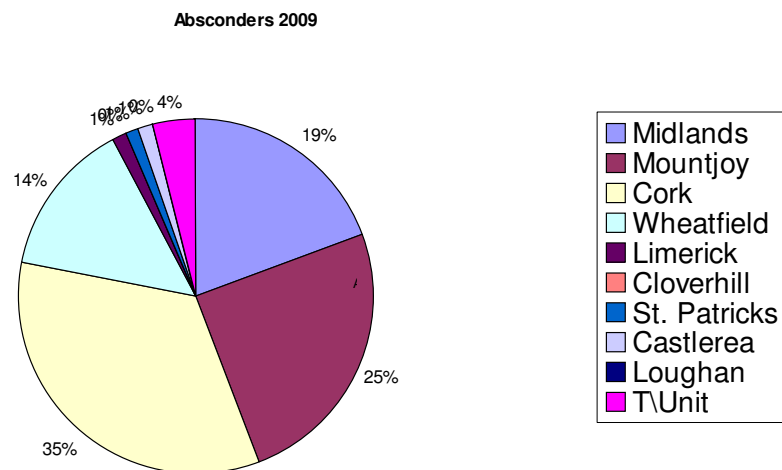
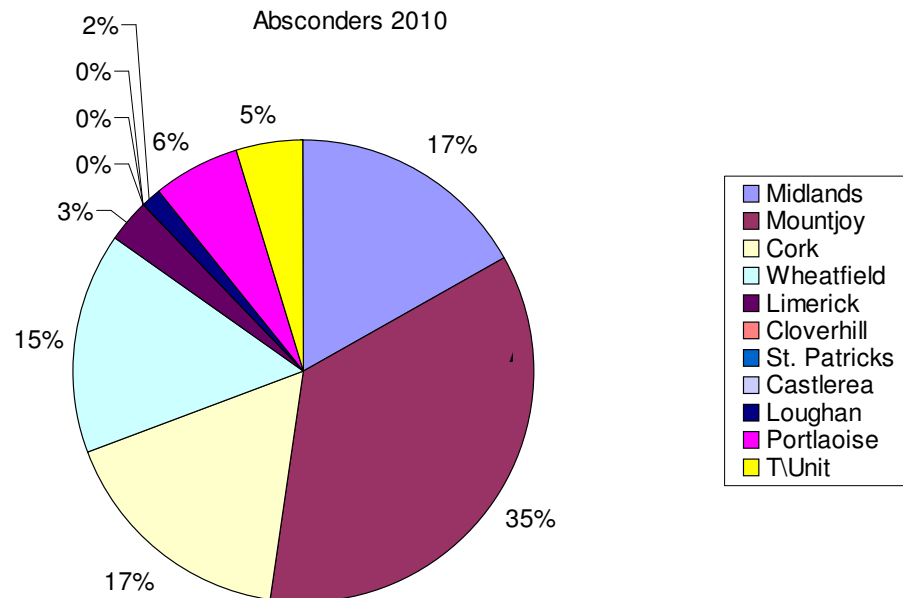
#### **Avoca House**

Avoca House continues to operate in a manner which promotes the ethos of Shelton Abbey. Offenders graduate to the single cell, ensuite accommodation from the main House in most instances. There are however, allowances made for special case offenders who will transfer directly into Avoca house from the transferring prison. Examples of this category of offender would be an offender serving Life, other long term offenders.

# VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

## Offenders Statistics

325 offenders transferred into Shelton Abbey in 2010. An increase of bed capacity by 10, from 100 to 110 offenders. There were 65 offenders absconded from Shelton Abbey in 2010 as opposed to 77 in 2009. See attached Chart



Committee members voiced their concerns on the criteria for the picking of prisoners suitable for Shelton Abbey, and queried the sentencing policy management of Department of Justice & IPS vis-a- vis Types of Offences i.e. Fines that should not command a custodial sentence.

A total of 8 offenders gained external employment locally on a Daily Temporary Release basis.

# **VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

## **Educational Activities in 2010**

Educational Services were provided by the whole time equivalent of 7.4 teachers, that's 3 full time and 9 part time teachers. Classes were held in the usual day time hours and during the Evenings from 5.30pm until 7.30pm. The teaching regime was altered this year on the recommendation of the Regime Report (07) to provide classes to us during the traditional school holidays periods.

The total number of offenders enrolled for education courses in 2010 was 211.

## **Outdoor Pursuits**

A group of 16 offenders, attended Arklow Leisure Centre for swimming courses accompanied the P.E. teachers and a Officer. Two regular soccer sessions were timetabled per week, coached by the P.E.teacher, Gym Officer and FAI coach.

Weekly forest walks took place on Friday afternoons. In June and July a group of 14 offenders went Hill-walking on three occasions, accompanied by an Officer and two P.E. Teachers. Tennis and Volleyball was played, with a successful "Shelton Tennis Tournament" bringing the summer P.E. programme to a conclusion.

## **Arts Council Projects**

A Woodsculpture project was completed between July and September by a group of six offenders with our Woodsculpture teacher. The group planned and made a cabinet to house a TV to be erected in the Visiting area. Having made the cabinet, the group then carved a design on the doors which is designed to complement the ornate ceiling in the room.

Various other activities included a Drama workshop, Table-Quiz, and Forest-walks. These extra activities were run in conjunction with regular timetabled classes through to the end of July

## **Health Care**

The needs of offenders were well catered for during the year and there were no incidents which gave rise to concerns. A local Doctor attends on 5 mornings per week for a two hour period. Outside of these times, the Doctor will attend if required in an emergency type situation. The dental and optical needs of offenders are catered for by appointment in Arklow town. There is a Health Care Staffing compliment of two Nurse Officers rostered back to back from 8am to 8pm, 7 days per week.

## **Library**

A most welcome improvement occurred in our Library, during the year which did much to enhance and improve the service available to the offenders.

## **Psychology**

Our Psychology needs were met during the year with the attendance of a Psychologist from the Dochas Centre for two days per month and who unfortunately was transferred back to Dublin in October 2010 and has not being replaced since. The Psychology service facilitates workshops and courses to offenders on issues such as Stress, Anger Management, etc. These courses result from a close working relationship between Health Care, Probation and Education Services.

## **Probation Service**

Our Probation Service continued to operate on a five day week. The Probation Service provided a full service to all our offenders during the year in addition to playing an active role in multi - disciplinary working and in partnership with the other services delivering rehabilitation programmes and initiatives to offenders.

# **VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

## **Other Services**

### **Security**

CCTV and Alarmed External Doors continue to provide added assistance in providing security within Shelton Abbey. The Security Screening Booth at the entrance to Shelton Abbey allows staff to check all visitors re identification, and also allows for the secure storage of visitors mobile phones, handbags etc. in line with Irish Prison Service guidelines on security. There were 103 mobile phones confiscated, in total for the year.

### **Staff**

The staffing compliment for Shelton Abbey 53 officers. To date 3 Offr posts, 1 A.C.O., & 2 Industrial Supervisor Posts have remained unfilled. A total of 11 Officer retired in 2010 and 7 has been replaced.

### **Recreation**

With the increase in capacity it was important that efforts were made to improve the recreational facilities available to offenders. Room space became available with re- location of the Tuck Shop. The room was refurbished and set it up as a pool and darts room. This has proved to be popular with offenders during the evenings and at weekends. A fully equipped Gym which is open 7 days per week and managed by 2 qualified Gym Officers. Inmates attend Coral leisure Centre in Arklow on a weekly basis where offenders are taught to swim, play indoor soccer, squash and raquetball. F.A.I. Soccer Skills Course are provided in Shelton Abbey with a Soccer Coach to facilitate said course on 1 afternoon per week.

There are regular Bingo sessions, Table Quiz's (in conjunction with the Education Unit), Card Drives, Dart Competitions, Soccer Tournaments and Pool Competitions for offenders.

### **Projects completed during the Year**

The skills of offenders committed here during the course of the year were utilised as much as possible on the various projects that were undertaken. This proved to be particularly beneficial to them and the Centre in terms of utilising their skills and reducing costs that would ordinarily have to be paid had external contractors been engaged to carry out the work.

Projects completed during the year were:

There was major damage done to the gardens following the bad floods in January, when the Avoca River burst its banks. New drainage was put in to alleviate any further flooding, paths had to be repaired and renewed. Red brick, dwarf reclaimed walls were constructed at the Rose Garden and Canal areas.

All areas within Shelton Abbey were painted by offenders. One of the Farm sheds was developed to accomodate Bothar Heifers. Wardrobes and lockers were constructed for all bedrooms in the Main House. The roadway to the front of Shelton Abbey was lowered in order to prevent flooding. The Rose Garden was completely revamped. These works were completed by Shelton Abbey staff and offenders. Shelton Abbey supplied other prisons and IPS HQ with potatoes, eggs and flowers, with any revenue generated returning to the state. All of these items were grown/produced on the Farm in Shelton Abbey by our staff and offenders.

In addition to the above projects, the ongoing programme of General Maintenance of Shelton Abbey continued.

## **VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

---

**Patrick Fitzgerald ( Chairperson )**

-----  
**John Byrne**

-----  
**Fergus Nestor**

-----  
**John Kierans**

-----  
**Michael Hanrahan**

-----  
**Hugh O’Keeffe**

-----  
**P J Sheridan**