

Visiting Committee Annual Report 2007

Introduction

The Visiting Committee was made up of eleven members including the welcome addition of Mr Seamus Kilgannan, four members of the Committee have come to their expiration date and we would like to thank them for their time and effort given to the Visiting Committee here in Castlerea. The Committee held meetings on the first Thursday of each month, these meetings were always very well attended. Two members of the Committee visited the prison on a random basis every month, with a report given to the Committee.

Overcrowding

Once again the Committee was very concerned with the overcrowding taking place in Castlerea prison, the cell population for the prison is 215 but during the year there was a high of 253 in custody, which put enormous pressure on both staff and prisoners who ended up sleeping on mattresses on the floor. The remand prisoners of which there are 20 places hit an all time high during the year of 63. The Committee is aware of the new remand unit to be operational in 2008 and was hoped this would relieve the pressure that was put on spaces in 2007.

Psychiatric Prisoners

In the annual report for 2006 this matter was raised and is still a serious problem within the prison. A very good example of this was a prisoner who is suffering from schizophrenia, was serving 3 years for assault and was due for release on 21st September, a case conference was held on 10th July to see what could be done to help him upon release, as he was stable when taking the medication. It was decided that he should be released into a high support residential accommodation where supervision of medication would take place. However when it came to his release date there was no place available for him and only at the very minute a place was made for him. This just highlights the problems facing the Prison Service and the Committee feel there should be more liaison within all the different departments to avoid any problems in the future.

Kitchen Area

It was with delight that the Committee heard the kitchen in Castlerea was outright winners of the National Quality & Excellence Awards in the National Team Of The Year Award section and also the National Team Player Of The Year Award also, congratulations to all involved in this fantastic achievement. The Q mark was also retained to Emerald standard, and with 14 prisoners attending the chefs course in association with the National Apprenticeship in Athlone IT. This is just a brief outline of the great work taking place there.

Waste Management

This is a fantastic development within the prison providing work for prisoners in the recycling of all the waste created within the prison, with all the waste sorted into their separate categories and then recycled accordingly. The saving to the environment and the prison is to be commended.

Prison Inspector

It was with great sadness the Visiting Committee in Castlerea heard of the untimely death of Justice Kinlan may he rest in peace.

Probation Service

It was with delight that the Committee was informed of the extra resources given to the probation services in Castlerea with 2 probation officers operating full time within the prison and a senior covering the area.

Workshop Area's

The workshops are all fully operational with fabric, carpentry, computers and colour chart. The work given to these prisoners is a brilliant source of occupation and rehabilitation.

Redevelopment

As previously stated the very welcome new Remand Unit and Special Care Unit is well on the way to completion in 2008. The 2 new houses in the Grove area is a welcome development which were opened during the year. The other areas such as the main gate, indoor recreation hall, outdoor recreation facility, upgraded control centre are well on the way towards completion.

Chaplaincy

The lay chaplain Margaret Connaughton remains in place and does tremendous work within the prison and co-ordinates mass with the local Parish Priest and with any needs of other religious denominations.

School Area

The work done in the school area once again is to be commended with a very high level of interest in the classes provided, with some classes been over subscribed. The various levels of exams also with prisoners taking on the leaving cert, junior cert and taking part in the Open University. Results as follows:

Fetac Autumn 2006

Level 3

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Ceramics	Joanne Foley	5	3	successful
Batik-Textiles	Mary O'Shea		3	successful
Irish	Charles Taylor	2	1	successful
Health related fitness	Niamh Mulhern	2	1	successful
Personal and Interpersonal	Clare Connolly	1	1	successful

Level 4

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Personal and Interpersonal	Clare Connolly	1	1	Distinction

Level 5

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Personal & Social Identity	Clare Connolly	1	1	Merit
Communications	Sean Butler	4	4	Distinctions
Word Processing	Paddy Healy	2	4	Distinctions
Computer Architecture	Angela Dennehy	2	1	Distinctions
Work Experience	Clare Connolly	1	1	Distinction
Local History	Mark Kennedy	2	1	Distinctions
Spread Sheets	Paddy Healy	2	1	Distinctions
Drug related issues	Clare Connolly	1	1	Merit

Fetac Summer 2007

Level 3

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Personal Interpersonal	Angela Garrett	2	1	Successful
Ceramics	Joanne Foley	5	5	Successful
Textiles	Mary O'Shea		1	Successful
Food&Cookery	Brid Coyle	3	6	Successful
Leather work	Graham Fontaine	3	1	Successful
Woodcraft	Des Philips	10	2	Successful
Music Appreciation	Charles Taylor	2	3	Successful

Level 4

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Drawing	Mary O'Shea	4	1	Distinction
Painting	Mary O'Shea	4	2	Distinction merit
Woodcraft	Des Phillips	5	1	Distinction

Level 5

Modules	Teacher	Hours per week	Number of candidates	Grades
Communication	Sean Butler	4	9	Distinctions
Spread sheets	Paddy Healy	4	4	Distinctions
Word Processing	Paddy Healy	4	4	Distinctions
Data base	Paddy Healy	4	1	Distinction
Work Experience	Clare Connolly	1	5	Distinctions
Upholstery	Tommy Finan	6	2	Distinctions
Drug related issues	Clare Connolly	1	5	2distinctions 1 merit 2 passes
Computer Architecture	Angela Dennehy	2	1	Distinction
Pay roll	Paddy Healy	2	3	Distinctions
Nutrition	Clare Connolly	1/2	1	Distinction

Department of Education Examinations June 2007

Junior Certificate

Subject	Level	Teacher	Hours per week	No of students	Result
Art	Ord	Mary O'Shea	4	1	B

Leaving Certificate

Subject	Level	teacher	Hours per week	No of students	Result
English	Ord	Bern Butler	5	5	D2,B2,C1,D1
Maths	Higher	Paddy Healy	2	3	A1,B2,B2,

Open University

Coordinating teacher Angela Dennehy (2 hours per week)

Student	Course	Grade
Student 1	M150	Successful
Student 2	M150, M248, MS221	All successful
Student 3	T172	Successful
Student 4	K100	Successful
Student 5	Masters In Education	
Student 6	Cert in Health and Social Care	

Prisoners Before The Visiting Committee

Once again this year seen a very small number of prisoners to see the Committee which is a great indication of how the prison is been run. Any prisoner that did see the Committee the query was given as much time as required and a appropriate action taken to resolve each matter.

Conclusion

The members of the Visiting Committee see Castlerea prison as been a well run prison dealing with the needs of prisoners and their families. The issue of overcrowding will be greatly helped with the opening of the new Remand Unit and Special Care Unit. The members of the Visiting Committee would like to acknowledge the courtesy and help extended to them by the Governor and staff over the last year.

VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Michael Nevin _____

Edward Brady _____

Paddy Greaney _____

Luie Mc Entire _____

Martin Daly _____

Evelyn Varley _____

Seamus Kilgannan _____

