

## **Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee Annual Report 2007**

**Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee have pleasure in presenting their report for the year 2007.**

**Shelton Abbey is an open Prison with dormitory type accommodation catering for 60 offenders. There are 2 prisoners serving life sentences and both have single room accommodation.**

**We held a total of 12 meetings this year, all of which were well attended even though the committee only had 10 members. As always a very good relationship was kept with offenders and other agencies within Shelton Abbey throughout the year. All members arrived early for each meeting and were available to meet with offenders and dealt with any queries at the meeting. There was just one appointment to the committee this year.**

**So far this year 587 prisoners were transferred into Shelton Abbey, this is an increase of 200 more than last year. This turnover does not allow the various agencies time to work with prisoners and put in place pre-release courses. This increase in prisoners has unfortunately increased the number of absconders, there were a total of 72 so far this year of which 15 are still at large. This increase in absconders is of great concern to the committee as the local papers have written about it and in turn created anxiety among the local community as to their personal safety and the safety of their property. We feel that there was not adequate selection of prisoners being transferred to Shelton Abbey.**

**The new building which will cater for 44 prisoners in single room accommodation was completed during the year and is awaiting staffing levels to be increased to have it opened. We believe that this building will allow some more long term prisoners being transferred here which will greatly improve the overall stability of Shelton Abbey.**

**As always the education unit provided some excellent training for offenders during the year. The Education Unit is now a F.E.T.A.C. Quality Assured Centre and courses are held in Woodcraft Level 4, C.A.D. Level 5, Personal and Interpersonal Skills Level 3, Health Related Fitness Level 4, Computer Literacy Level 3 and Art & Craft Design Level 4. These were all provided by a Supervising Teacher who has 14 full and part time teachers giving day and evening classes.**

**An Art and Craft Exhibition was held in early December in the local hotel and over €4,000.00 was raised for the charity "Vision".**

**There were a large number of offenders provided with Safe Pass Course to enable them to work in construction on release. Fork Lift Training and Machine Driving courses were also provided through the Education unit. They also had an "Anger Management" and "Addiction Awareness" Courses which were always well attended by offenders and was very successful and will be ongoing.**

**The Education Unit provides basic literacy to prisoners also English as a second language to foreign nationals.**

**During the year a number of speakers came to talk as part of the Getting Out course.**

**The spiritual needs of the offenders are looked after by Chaplain Sr Pat Egan who will make contact with their families when required. She at times takes offenders out on visits to their homes or to visit family graves. Fr. Eamon Crossan PP in Avoca attends every week to say mass. A number of offenders were allowed out to attend Church of Ireland service in the local church when requested.**

**Probation & Welfare Officer Catherine Doyle attends Shelton Abbey daily and caters for the welfare needs of offenders. She will assist them in making out employment applications and setting up interviews. She also works closely with the Education unit and assists in setting up suitable courses for offenders with FAS.**

**The doctor attends daily to look after the health of the offenders and see new committals on arrival here. They work alongside medical orderly Tom Dillon and Nurse Officer Brendan Dillon who was transferred from the Midlands Prison during the year and inform them of any medication required or further treatment needed.**

**The monthly review meetings are a necessary part of the running of Shelton Abbey it organises programmes for offenders and is attended by a member from IPS Operations, Head Teacher, Probation & Welfare Officer, Chaplain, Governor, Chief Officer and some officers who discuss each person and make recommendations accordingly.**

**We visited the kitchen on occasions before the meetings and are always impressed that it continues to provide excellent meals and is always kept spotless, once again this year it achieved the hygiene award. The offenders working take great pride in their work and attend the hygiene course set out for them by the chef in charge. There is work ongoing to increase the size of the kitchen and the dining area in order for them to cater for increased numbers.**

**There were no major incidents during the year. There is a good relationship between staff and offender's. During the year Clerk11 Brendan Gilroy and Chief Trades Officer Patrick Gahan retired from the Prison Service they had both served for over 25 years in Shelton Abbey.**

**A monthly disciplinary meeting takes place with The Psychologist, Probation & Welfare Officer, Head Teacher, Drugs Councillor, Governor, Chaplain and Chief Officer where all prisoners are discussed and recommendations are made to the various agencies.**

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Mr. P. Fitzgerald Chairperson

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Mr. J. Murphy

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Mr. J. Byrne

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Ms. C. Douglas

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Mr. H. O’Keeffe

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Ms. O. Doyle

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Mr. P.J. Sheridan

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Mr. S. Quirke

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Mr. M. Hanrahan

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Mr. F. McDonnell