Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report For Year Ending December 2006.

The Minister For Justice, Equality & Law Reform, 72/76 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.d

A Chara,

The Visiting Committee to Arbour Hill Prison have pleasure in submitting herein our Annual Report for year ending December 2006.

☐ The Visiting Committee.

The Committee consisted of nine members at the beginning of the year and during the year one additional member was appointed however in November one of the existing members resigned and consequently the Committee ended the year as it had begun with nine members. The Committee met every month and at least two members of the Committee made unannounced visits to the prison between each monthly meeting. As a majority of our members are recent appointments to the Visiting Committee we gave some time to discussing the role, functions and working methodology of Visiting Committees. Arising from these discussions we produced a *Mission Statement* setting out our parameters in function and encouraging pro activity in our performance. We have found this approach to have been very helpful in maintaining focus and sustaining a positive and energetic approach to our role. We would commend this type of structured approach to others. Arising from our mission statement we invited the Inspector Of Prisons to meet with us and explore as to how we could be of mutual benefit in fulfilling our separate remits. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Justice Kinlen for accepting with alacrity and meeting with us for a fulsome discussion. Mr Paul Linnane, the Senior Probation Officer for Arbour Hill Prison also accepted our invitation and his presentation and interaction with the Committee was most informative, positive and indeed beneficial. We would like to sincerely thank Mr Linnane for his time and commitment. In the course of the coming year we hope to meet with other Heads Of Function in continuance of this interactive programme.

During the year Governor Tom Somers left on promotion and Assistant Governor Karl MacEntagert retired. We wish to sincerely thank them both for their help and courteousness to us during their tenure of office. We look forward to working closely with their replacements Governor Sean Quigley and Assistant Governor Conal Healy in furthering and developing the rehabilitative, caring and

humane ethos of this facility. Our experiences to date makes us very. confident in the regard.

Requests/Complaints/Applications.

- <u>In the course of the year a total of seven prisoners came to see the Committee.</u>
- Prisoner (A) saw the Committee on four occasions in relation to his ongoing complaints apropos the performance of the Prison Service Escort Corps while they have been escorting him to and from court.
- The Committee have been in contact with the Governor of Arbour Hill, the Governor of PSEC, and the Director Of Operations in seeking to obtain clarification as to the grounding of said complaints and if necessary what actions if any are necessary to address same.
- 2 Prisoner (B) complained that he was being 'bullied'.
- **2** Subsequent enquires strongly suggested that this inmate was in fact the 'bully'; when offered a transfer to another prison he declined.
- Prisoner (C) complained that family member had been banned from visits as a consequence of being caught attempting to pass 'drugs' to him.
- **9** Prisoner informed that the issue is operational and not one the Visiting committee would become involved in.
- Prisoner (D) complained that he was refused T/R to visit his brother's grave.
- The Committee sought reason for same and prisoner was informed.
- Prisoner (E) requested the Committee's assistance in getting a day out prior to his release?
- **6** Committee undertook to do what they could!
- **6** Prisoner (F) sought the Committee's assistance in getting outside counsellor to assist him with his drug issues prior to his release.

- **6** Advised to see the Probation Service who routinely handle this type of request.
- Prisoner (G) Complained that an Officer pushed him during a fire evacuation exercise.
- Committee to investigate and revert.

Suicide & Self Harm

Arbour Hill has had no incident of 'suicide' or 'attempted suicide' in the course of the current year. There was one incident of self inflicted injury, fortunately this was at the lower end of the scale and on-site medical staff intervened and other than a brief visit to OPD no hospital treatment was necessary. We note with concern that during the year there was one instance where a prisoner was on a waiting list for the Central Mental Hospital for forty three days. It is unacceptable that a prisoner who has been deemed in need of Psychiatric care should be unable to access a 'bed' for such a prolonged period.

Facilities & Services. Health care.

Health care is catered for by a range of services:

- 24 hour Medical Orderly/Nurse cover.
- A G.P. five days a week. (On call at weekends).
- Two resident Psychologists
- A visiting Psychiatrist.⁺
- Dental care provided by Dublin Dental Hospital.
- Visiting Psychotherapist.
- Visiting Chiropodist.
- Optician as required.
- AA
- **○** NA

Probation Service.

Arbour Hill now has a team of four Probation Officers: [Not all are full time & one is a 'trainee'] and one off-site Senior Probation Officer. Their role includes participation in the delivery of the Sex Offender Treatment, Thinking Skills and Group Skills programmes in addition to supervision in the community, provision of work related skills, accommodation in the community, supervision orders as a safeguard, and all committal induction. The Probation Service also participate in ongoing operational issues such as Suicide Awareness, Partnership and prisoner

reviews including Parole Board Reviews. Arbour Hill is indeed very fortunate to have the service of such a capable and dedicated team.

Treatment Programmes.

Arbour Hill currently offers the following therapy based programmes:

- Thinking Skills Programme.
- ☐ Group Skills Programme.
- *□* Sex Offenders Programme.
- Tifers' Programme.
- ☐ Alternatives To Violence Programme.

SOTP.

The Sex Offenders Programme is a full-time programme delivered by the Psychology and Probation Services. Once again it was fully subscribed and we would like to express our appreciation of everyone involved in the delivery of such a demanding programme. During the year the Committee took issue with some elements of the print media when comments were published that seemed to denigrate the course, its content and the delivery mythology.

GROW.

Additionally during the past year a GROW programme has been introduced: facilitated by the Probation Service. This programme has been very well received and attendance and participation is excellent.

Listener Scheme.

Under the stewardship of the Samaritans and co-ordinated by the Probation Service a 'Listener Scheme' has been put in place. A number of prisoners successfully underwent training and the scheme is now up and running smoothly. The participants are to be sincerely congratulated and commended for their willingness and commitment to contribute to the care and well-being of others. We would like to commend the Samaritans, Probation Service and Prison Management together with the various services for their initiative and enthusiasm in developing and expanding the services available to prisoners.

Drugs.

Arbour Hill Prison continues to maintain its drug free status and we note that staff and management continue to be ever vigilant in maintaining this position; we commend them for same.

Workshops, Training and the Industrial Area.

The Industrial Unit continues to be a key constituent in the provision of training and employment. It consists of five separate work areas: print, fabric, woodwork, Braille and catering. End products are supplied throughout the public service, private bodies and other prisons. Notwithstanding the production capacity of these areas it of even greater importance to note their capacity to provide employment for almost all the prisoner population in addition to providing training and experience to such a large number of prisoners. FETAC certification has been sought and approved for a number of prisoners in the woodwork and printing areas. Efforts are continuing to broaden the certification process to include the maximum numbers of prisoners in the various categories.

We would wish to commend the Industrial Staff for their skill and enthusiasm in constantly seeking to develop and progress this important aspect of prison life.

Educational Facilities/Services.

Approximately 85% of the prison population participate in the education process. A wide range of subjects/classes are available ranging from Basic Literacy to degree level through the Open University. The prison has approximately twenty teachers some are full time and some part time. The level of prisoner participation in education is in itself a reflection of their commitment and dedication. Their continued participation in developing 'pre-release' and other courses in addition to their traditional educational role is to be sincerely commended.

The Kitchen:

Arbour Hill kitchen was awarded the 'Q' Mark for the first time this year and we would like to congratulate the catering staff and prisoners working in the kitchen area for their momentous achievement. Hygiene and cleanliness are paramount in the preparation and presentation of food and mindful of the physical limitation of their work area their achievement is all the greater.

A 28 day rotating menu is implemented in addition to specific diets for Muslims and some other non national prisoners. Rice is routinely offered as an alternative to potatoes. Operating standards continue to be on a par with outside canteen or hotel operations as indeed is reflected in the afore said award.

Spiritual Care.

During the year Fr Declan Blake our full time Chaplain was replaced by Fr Ciaran Enright. We would like to sincerely express our gratitude to Fr Declan for his

generosity and dedication in serving both prisoners and staff at this facility. Arbour Hill is rather fortunate in that Fr Ciaran has applied himself with the same enthusiasm and generosity as his predecessor and we look forward to working with him. In addition to providing for prisoner's spiritual needs Fr Ciaran also frequently accompanies prisoners who are close to release on trips outside the prison.

Non catholic inmates are catered for by visiting pastors of their specific denomination. Guidance on the specific needs of Muslim inmates is provided by the Mosque on the South Circular Road.

Special Observation Suite).

The Special Observation Suite was used on fourteen occasions during the year. On nine occasions the placement was at the request of the prisoner. On two occasions the placement was out of concern for the prisoners safety pending medical intervention. The remaining two occasions were to facilitate the movement of prisoners who while in care at the Central Mental Hospital had to make a court appearance.

Waste Management.

2006 has been a remarkable year in the context of waste management at Arbour Hill. Systems have been introduced to separate and process all categories of waste. So successful has this vast operation been that Arbour Hill Prison was not only the regional winner in the Dublin City Council Waste management Competition but also the Dublin City and County winner. We would like to congratulate the management, staff and indeed prisoners for their enthusiasm and commitment in implementing such a worthwhile initiative.

Chairman's summary.

During the past year it has been my good fortune to chair a very proactive and committed Visiting Committee's. I want to thank each and every member for their willingness to contribute positively to what is an important component in the operation of this custodial facility. During the past year, the prison has in our view, been run and managed very efficiently with an emphasis on rehabilitation and humanity.

I am mindful at this time that Arbour Hill Prison has recently acquired from the Dept. Of Defence, a sizeable site to the west of the prison and this acquisition offers numerous opportunities in the future development of this facility. As the Visiting Committee to this prison we would sincerely hope that future development would reflect the current ethos and that the creation of additional facilities rather than additional 'spaces' would be the guiding force behind any future developments.

As in previous years the staff prisoner relationship is excellent and this is the key element in sustaining this facility's unique atmosphere. We wish to thank the Governor and staff for their co-operation and assistance to us and for their ongoing determination to create and sustain a pleasant, caring regime in sometimes challenging circumstances. It is our sincere hope that this facility

will continue to operate as it does today, a model facility with a humane and caring ethos.

Our Secretary.

This has been a year of change and innovation at Arbour Hill and the Visiting Committee could not have developed and achieved its goals without the very able, courteous and efficient assistance of our secretary Mr P J McAndrew. We owe him a special debt of gratitude.

James O'Hanrahan[Chairman].
Ita Greene.
Rita Hayes
Eithne Killeen
Mr Philip Cantwell
Mr Patrick Culloty
Ms Wilhelmena Daly
Ms Angela O'Connor
Ms Mairín Hyland


