

# Visiting Committee Annual Report 2006

## Introduction

The Committee meet the first Thursday of the month. All meetings were well attended. Two members visiting the prison at random during each month with a detailed inspection of the prison on each occasion. The new positions were filled by Mr Martin Daly and Ms E Varley.

## Psychiatric Prisoners

The Committee are very concerned that people with psychiatric problems or suicidal tendencies were ending up as prisoners in Castlerea Prison. The Committee feel it is not the place to keep persons with serious psychiatric conditions for both the prisoner and the staff that have to deal with them 24 hours a day. The Committee would commend the staff for the professional manner in which they deal with these prisoners. In conclusion the Committee see it as a matter of urgency that these prisoners be placed in proper care with the health care system.

## Workshop Area's

The workshop area has benefited enormously by the opening of the carpentry shop, computer shop and the waste management area, with three additional instructors, providing great employment to prisoners and help them in the rehabilitation process.

## Overcrowding

The overcrowding in the prison was of serious cause of alarm with remand prisoners hitting a high of 46 during the year with only accommodation for 20, the overcrowding in general was also highlighted with 238 in total population an all time high for Castlerea with capacity for 202 which in turn causes serious strain on manpower and resources. The Committee were pleased to learn of the new remand wing under construction at the moment and hoped it would relieve the strain on resources.

## Assault on Staff

The Committee was very concerned to hear of the unprovoked attack on a member of staff, Officer Mullarkey by prisoner \_\_\_\_\_, and was delighted to hear of his return to work.

## Redevelopment

The new locker room - shower area was a very welcome development for the staff of Castlerea prison. With the following development ongoing :

- (1) New remand unit
- (2) New special care unit
- (3) New indoor recreation hall
- (4) New outdoor recreation facility
- (5) New visiting facility
- (6) New laundry
- (7) New reception
- (8) Upgraded control centre
- (9) Two new houses in the Grove
- (10) Refurbished main gate
- (11) Refurbishment of the old locker room

It is also proposed to construct a therapeutic unit on the site of the unused building It is hoped to have the above work completed within 18 months to 2 years.

## Kitchen Area

The Excellence Ireland Quality Association awarded the kitchen its highest award the “Emerald Award” and congratulated the staff and the prisoners involved in the great work involved in obtaining this award.

## Education Unit

Once again the level of education provided by the prison education unit within the prison was to be complemented with a lot of classes been over subscribed, with prisoners entering both the leaving certificate and junior certificate exams also a lot of prisoners taking part in the Open University courses available. There is great work been done in the stone shop and the home economics to mention but a few.

## Chaplaincy

Welcomed the appointment of lay chaplain Maragret Connaughton to Castlerea Prison and mass been celebrated by the local Parish Priest. There is in place facilities for the needs of other religious denominations.

## Prisoners Before The Visiting Committee

The small number of prisoners to see the Committee was an indication of how well the prison is been run, of the prisoners that did come before the Committee all cases were discussed at some length and appropriate action taken to resolve each matter.

## Conclusion

Castlerea Prison has again given the members of the Visiting Committee of been very well run prison and when the refurbishment has been completed would relieve the pressures of overcrowding. The members of the Committee would like to thank the management and staff for the level of courtesy extended to them during the year and look forward to 2007.

## Visiting Committee Annual Report 2006

Michael Nevin \_\_\_\_\_

Edward Brady \_\_\_\_\_

Paddy Greaney \_\_\_\_\_

Mary Hoade \_\_\_\_\_

Eileen Morris \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Geraghty \_\_\_\_\_

Luie Mc Entire \_\_\_\_\_

Martin Daly \_\_\_\_\_

Marie Cleary \_\_\_\_\_

Evelyn Varley \_\_\_\_\_