

Portlaoise Prison  
Dublin Road  
Portlaoise  
Co. Laois



Priosún Port Laoise  
Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Port Laoise  
Contae Laoise

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Mr. Michael McDowell, T.D.,  
Tánaiste & Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform,  
72 - 76 St. Stephen's Green,  
Dublin 2.

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**18 DEC 2006**

**PRISONS POLICY  
DIVISION**

### **Visiting Committee Annual Report 2006.**

We the members of the Visiting Committee at Portlaoise Prison are pleased to present our Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 2006.

The Committee meet on the first Tuesday of each month during the year. Attendance at these meetings was very good and we are pleased to report that our Committee now has eleven members, six of which were newly appointed during the year.

Two members of the Committee visit the Prison unannounced during each month. During these visits we check different areas of the Prison and make ourselves available to prisoners to discuss any grievances that they may wish to bring to our attention.

We once again wish to report on how disappointed we are that still prisoners still occupy the D Block despite numerous reports from various Committees during the last number of years on the appalling state of this block and the deplorable conditions for both prisoners and staff.

We are glad to report that the building of the new C Block is progressing well and we look forward to the completion of this block by the end of 2007.

We are pleased to report that the New Visitors Centre is bright and welcoming and provides tea and refreshments to prisoners family and friends who in many cases have travelled long journeys. There is also a colourful play area for children.

The Education area despite having a very poor classroom set up had a very positive uptake of classes. There is a high quality, broad and flexible range of classes and courses available to the prisoners. The Education Unit facilitates students to study through a process of open learning. Once again the prisoners produced some very good results in the Junior and Leaving Certificate and we would like to compliment the teaching staff who work under difficult circumstances yet produce some exceptional results.

The Committee would like to see a Horticulture class and area for same be available for prisoners. It is hoped that such an area will be incorporated into the planning and design of the New C Block.

The health of the prisoners throughout the year was good. The Medical Officer (G.P.), along with her team of nurse officers and medical orderlies provided an excellent service for prisoners

throughout the year. Other services are provided by visiting psychiatrist, dentist, chiropodist and optician.

However, we are disappointed to report that the Prison once again does not have a Psychologist. The Psychology position filled only last year has once again become vacant and to date no replacement has been appointed.

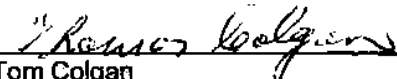
The Catholic Chaplain, Fr Drumm and Church of Ireland Minister take care of the spiritual needs of the prisoners.

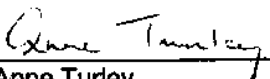
The Probation & Welfare Service visit the Prison on a regular basis and provide an important support service to prisoners and their families.

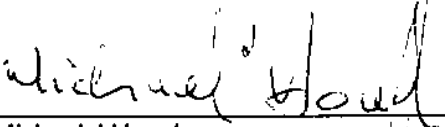
We would like to compliment the Industrial Supervisor and his team of Assistant Industrial Supervisors who run the kitchen for their high achievements and standards in the preparation, cooking and distribution of the food every day. We would also like to report that all of the prisoners working in this area attend Cookery classes once a week under the Leonardo Programme which is certified by HASSP.

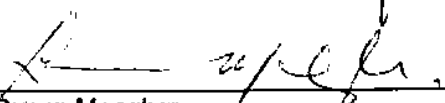
The Inspector of Prisons visited Portlaoise in November of this year and he met with the Visiting Committee at their monthly meeting. He was pleased with the work the Committee do in Portlaoise and thanked them for their interest and dedication.

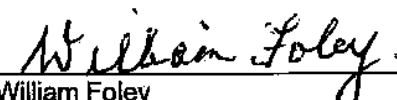
In conclusion, we would like to record our sincere thanks to the Governor and Staff of the Prison for the courtesy shown to us during our visits throughout the year.

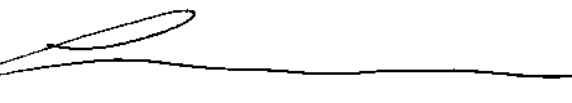
  
Tom Colgan  
Chairman

  
Anne Turley

  
Michael J Hough

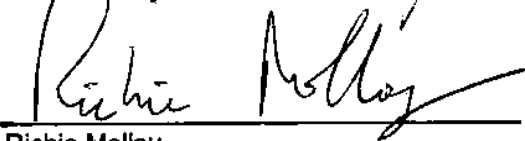
  
Susan Meagher

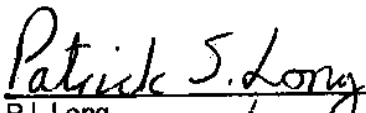
  
William Foley

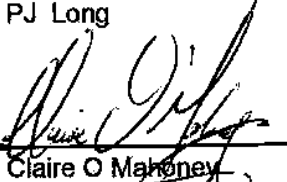
  
Liam McCabe

  
Eilish Croke

  
Eithne Reddy

  
Richie Molloy

  
PJ Long

  
Claire O Mahoney