

## TRAINING UNIT.

Annual Report of the Visiting Committee to the Training Unit, Glengarriff Parade, North Circular Road, Dublin 7, for year ended 31 December 2004.

A formal meeting took place every month which was very well attended throughout 2004. In conjunction with this meeting, two members visited at times of their own choice and inspected the Institution. The positive attendance record and discussions at same of members demonstrated the concern and interest shown during the time under review.

We wish to thank Mr. Aidan Mullaly, Mr. Matt. Ryan and Mr. Denis Falvey who finished their terms as members in December 2004. Their contributions were valued by all concerned.

A total of 181 offenders were transferred to the Training Unit from other Prisons and Places of Detention. All signed a formal written contract on arrival committing themselves to the total abstinence from all illegal and mood altering drugs. Regular urine testing continued throughout the year to ensure that the Training Unit continued to remain the only drug-free Institution within the Irish Prison Service. The testing on an irregular basis for all offenders helped them to concentrate their minds on the physical, mental benefits of being drug-free and the advantages that the Training Unit has to offer.

The Industrial Training area continued providing a skills and work training programme. The City and Guilds of London Institute certified our courses in welding, engineering, electronics and computer skill, and one offender in particular was awarded a Diploma in Electronics from FAS.

Driving tuition is provided in all vehicle classes through an external provider and this proved very popular and successful with many offenders.

This year also saw the replacement and upgrading of all the computers which should be most helpful in continuing the provision of industry relevant training. To assist in this regard, three Industrial Training Instructors were successful in obtaining certificates from the National University of Ireland in training and development.

The Connect staff are pivotal to the selection of offenders for all in-house and external courses. This has been particularly noticeable during the year when these staff members assisted so many offenders succeeded in obtaining daily temporary release to many kinds of employment in the outside community. This is one of the prime targets of the Training Unit, to assist offenders again reintegrate with the community, obtain employment thereby earning money for their families and achieving a solid working base on full release. Offenders in 2004 worked in Pathways, Treble R Industries, Fas, attended horticultural courses in Dublin City University, A. C. R. G., Bond and Bridge Projects, Jobs Club, Goldenbridge, Matt Talbot Trust, Mountjoy Work Party, and Kevin Street D. I. T.

Catering for the diverse educational needs of students in a relatively small Institution such as the Training Unit presents a challenge to the teaching staff here. Every attempt is made to provide courses and learning opportunities which help equip students not only for the challenges which will face them on release but also prepare them for life-long learning, such as the addiction study course which runs on a continuous basis for 8 to 10 weeks, pre-release which assist a large number of offenders deal with the practical issues which will confront them on release. Likewise the parenting course gives offenders valuable preparation in an area which seems to raise more and more complex issues as

society changes. Literacy continues to be a central part of education with two teachers concentrating on one-to-one learners and Fetac foundation students. Numeracy levels are covered from basic to Leaving Certificate levels.

The interest in I. T. continues to be extremely strong. Students are prepared for Pitman word processing exams and the consistent high marks achieved in ECDL and Mous confirm both the skills of the students and their teachers.

Unusual in an Institutional setting is the current gifted music teacher who inspires his guitar students to develop not only their often underdeveloped musical talents but also their abilities in terms of recording skills.

The educational service held two Health and Fitness weeks during the year, which attracted large numbers of offenders. This year the level 2 Fetac examination was taken by a number of students and it is hoped to develop and consolidate this in 2005.

A major highlight of the year was the 21st Public Speaking final of the Sports and Cultural Council of CDVEC. To celebrate the coming of age of this event, the Training Unit was given the honour of hosting this year's competition. The large audience of invited guests included Mr. Liam Arundel, CEO City of Dublin VEC, Mr. Tim. Dalton, Secretary General, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Sean Alyward, Director General, Irish Prison Service as well as teachers and students from CDVEC's 22 colleges. The event was introduced by a short video entitled 'In Praise of Public Speaking' specially created by the students of the Training Unit. A hugely successful evening was crowned by a Training Unit student winning the Bowman Cup, inaugurated this year to mark the contribution to the competition of the late Jonathan Philbin Bowman.

Arts Week 2004 was a mix of lectures, workshops and concerts, with the centrepiece being the visual arts exhibition. As a result it was decided to exhibit the works of past students on a permanent basis on the walls of the Training Unit.

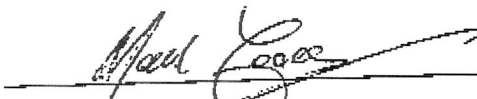
On 4 March 2004, World Book day, Chairman Noel Coade launched an initiative to provide the Training Unit with a Library Club at the monthly meeting of the Committee. This fund would be used to purchase all types of books, CD Roms and invite in specialist speakers to talk to offenders on topics that are relevant to their interests and needs. The money would be used to enable the offenders to make the best use of their leisure time here to prepare them for reintegration into the community, and to enhance the availability of knowledge and provision of behaviour options to offenders.


There was only one offender who asked to see the Committee during the year. The Committee were disappointed that no response other than an acknowledgement of receipt of the minute has been received four months later.


The Committee were very satisfied with the quality of the medical services supplied by both doctors.

In 2004, temporary release was granted to many offenders for compassionate reasons and for gainful employment as stated previously.

In conclusion, the Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Governor and all who work in the Training Unit for their support in 2004.

 Mr. Noel Coade.

 Ms. Kathleen Diamond.

 Mr. Denis Falvey.

Geraldine Foster

Mrs. Geraldine Foster.

Patsy Geraghty

Mr. Patsy Geraghty.

Tras Honan

Ms. Tras Honan.

Deirdre Keaneally

Ms. Deirdre Keaneally.

Aidan Mullaly

Mr. Aidan Mullaly.

Matt Ryan

Mr. Matt Ryan.