

# **CORK PRISON**

## **VISITING COMMITTEE**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2004**

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## **ANNUAL REPORT 2004**

In submitting our annual report for 2004 we are happy to report a satisfactory year within the prison with no serious problems arising.

Two new members Cait Ni Fholain and Eileen Curran joined our committee in January, and in December Oliver Clery came on the committee

### **The Prison**

The overcrowding in the prison continues to be of serious concern to us. We regularly have over 280 prisoners in a prison designed for 150. This problem is further compounded by the fact that there is no in cell sanitary facilities. The ongoing treat of court cases regarding slopping out can have serious consequences for Cork Prison and we hope it can be resolved. We had hoped for much better facilities from an extension to the prison, which we believed had started stage one with the building of a new outer perimeter wall, we were very disappointed when funds were withdrawn and transferred elsewhere. We now understand there is a change of policy and plans are being put in place to provide a new prison on Spike Island including the building a bridge to the Island. This will take some time to construct, so its looks as if we will have the present overcrowded conditions in Cork Prison for some time to come. We would urge that decisions be made quickly and work start as soon as possible to relieve the overcrowded and unhygienic conditions in the prison.

### **Staff**

We are concerned with the ongoing treats of industrial action by prison officers and hope the ongoing discussions will prove fruitful as any withdrawal of services would be very serious in our overcrowded situation. During the year we got an increase of 47 staff following the temporary closure of Spike Island Prison. We had some problems earlier in the year with the Medical Officers dispute and are happy this dispute is now resolved, but our psychologist has been on sick leave since mid Summer and we have not got a replacement which is not satisfactory

## **Education**

We are very pleased with the work in our education and workshops Dept with a good level of educational and training facilities being provided and being availed of by the prisoners. Our Hurley repair workshop featured in a special article in the "Irish Examiner" during the year and some of our talented prisoners produced a C.D. of music and song entitled "Songs from the Inside" which was launched by the acting Lord Mayor of Cork in Cork City Hall, opportunities are also provided for the sale of art pieces made by the prisoners

## **Kitchen**

We are pleased our kitchen received the "Q mark" award for personal hygiene excellence from CERT and were short listed for a national award

## **Repair Work**

Presently work is progressing on the roof of the administration and cell blocks which was badly needed, and the Close Circuit Television network is being upgraded

## **Inspector of Prisons**

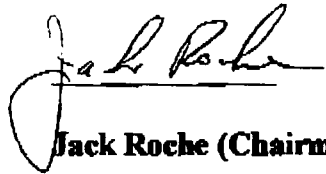
The Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention Mr Justice Dermot Kinken visited the prison from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of Sept. He and his assistant inspected all parts of the prison, he met some of the prisoners and some members of the staff, and three members of the visiting committee Eileen Curran, Terry Kelly, and Jack Roche, had a long meeting and exchange of views with him.

## **Meetings**

Our committee meetings are well attended, with members meeting prisoners if requested before the meeting and arrangements are made for two members to meet prisoners on another date if required. Most requests from prisoners are for transfers to other prisons or other not too serious complaints, which are always investigated and on one occasion the chairman referred a case to the Gardai following an allegation from a prisoner that he had been assaulted in an other prison before being transferred to Cork Prison, this case is ongoing. The visiting

committee visited Limerick Prison during the year and were most impressed by the progress being made there

The prison Governor Mr Sean Quigley announced at our November meeting that he is leaving Cork Prison to take up an appointment in Dublin and is being replaced in Cork by Mr Liam Metcalf. We wish Sean well in his new appointment, and welcome Liam who has been with us as deputy Governor, we congratulate him and look forward to working with him



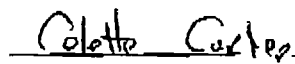
Jack Roche (Chairman)



Sadie Jordan



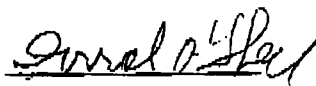
Bosco O Farrell




Colette Carter



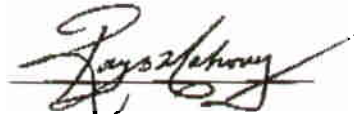
Ann Butler



Donal O Shea



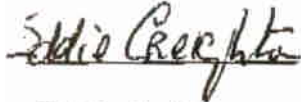
Cait Ni Fholain



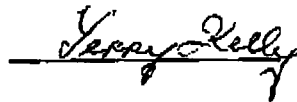
Ray O Mahony



Eileen Curran



Eddie Creighton



Terry Kelly