

WHEATFIELD PRISON

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Visiting Committee to Wheatfield Prison

2003

We the undersigned members of the Visiting Committee for Wheatfield Prison are pleased to present our report to the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform for the year ..2003.

The Committee met in Wheatfield on the third Saturday of each month, all meetings were very well attended.

MEETING'S

The members met in Wheatfield each month of their term of office. All aspects of the Inmate welfare were reviewed in addition to inspection of their accommodation and varied facilities. The standard's of hygiene and cleanliness can be regarded as most satisfactory and the Governor and staff are to be complimented in this respect.

The number of inmates who requested to meet the Committee during the year was 65 which averaged 5 per meeting. All their requests and grievances were heard and disposed of satisfactorily. Apart from the formal meeting's, many members made unscheduled visits to Wheatfield during which the visiting members spoke to the inmates in the work place, which was a less formal atmosphere than that which prevails at the committee meeting.

TEMPORARY RELEASES

Many inmates availed of Temporary Release throughout the year either on a part weekly or weekly basis or in some cases for special one day occasions.

WORK AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

In excess of 742 prisoners were processed through the work & training area during 2003. Inmates were awarded certificates for successfully completing their training programme at a range of skills including ... Hygiene, Welding, Printing, Typing, Indexing, and Catering. In each case the awarding body was an external agency and the recipient was awarded his certificate during a ceremony in the Main Library or the assembly hall.

Wheatfield Inmates played a major part in the Special Olympics of 2003. The Joinery, Metalwork and Painting and Decorating workshops all played a most important part in the construction of the following items required for the playing of the games.

Joinery shop Inmates produced approx. 120 benches, 4 score boards, 2 wheel chair ramps. Poles for horse riding jumps, podiums and steps for the presentation of the awards.

Welding Shop Inmates created over 200 poles for the Flags of the various countries taking part., 20 sign posts, 300 barriers to cordon off selected areas, and numerous frames for the Score Boards. The Inmates in the Painting and Decoration added superior finishing touches.

Efforts of the work and training team resulted in the institution receiving several awards.

1. Wheatfield was certified to IS242 FS Managing Systems.
2. Gilbeys category of Excellence award.
3. Maximum Grade of 5 As in the July Cert Audit.
4. Overall Grade A in excellence in Hygiene Management.

Education Unit

Wheatfield Education Unit Report for Visiting Committee 2003

The Prison Education Service (and Wheatfield Education Unit) has developed within a framework based on the principles and ideas advocated in the Council of Europe Report and Recommendations, Education in Prisons (Strasbourg 1990). The aim and objectives of the Prison Education Service, as outlined in the Management of Offenders (1994) can be summarised as follows:

To provide a high quality, broad and flexible programme of education that meets the needs of those in custody through helping them:

**Cope with their sentence
Achieve personal development
Prepare for life after release
Establish the appetite and capacity for lifelong learning**

Participation in educational activities is voluntary in Wheatfield, as it is in all prison education units. Of a total population of 370 inmates 242 are currently time tabled for classes. We offer a wide range of classes and courses suited to students of every level of ability. Students choose the range of classes or courses they wish to take and are individually time tabled.

Conclusion

The Committee are most happy with the numbers of Inmates gainfully employed and using the Educational facilities. The Kitchen is yet again; second to none ! With excellent food quality, content and presentation. The Staff of all ranks are consistently courteous and helpful when Members visit with Inmates.

The New Laundry will be ready for operation in the New Year. Justice Kinlan (Inspector of Prisons) requested to meet with the Visiting Committee in March, and did indeed meet with Mr O Driscoll (Chairman) and Mr. Gunning (Vice Chairman) on the 23/6/03.

There was one Death in custody. Frank Issaccson was found unconscious in his cell by the Night Guard. He was taken to Hospital but pronounced dead a short time later .

May he Rest in Peace.

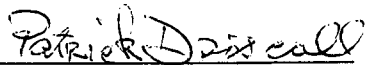
The Visiting Committee from the Training Unit requested to visit Wheatfield Prison in June and were most impressed with the cleanliness of the Prison. They enjoyed a full tour of Wheatfield including the very productive workshops and met and spoke to many Inmates.

There was one escape from Wheatfield in 2003. Thomas Connors from Hospital on the 27/5/03 to the 4/6/03; wherein he was returned to Wheatfield by the Gardai.

The 2 Drug Free Units set up in 2003 are still running smoothly. All categories of Inmates can avail of this chance to give up drugs. The Committee realise that this would not be possible without the assistance and commitment of the Staff on the floor, the Governor and his Managers, Medical, Welfare and Prison Chaplains. We applaud their efforts to rid the system of the curse of the addiction to drugs that effects so many of our youth.

Wheatfield Prison is in pristine condition. It is consistently clean and tidy on our numerous individual visits. All Inmates are in good health.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governor Edward Whelan and all his Staff for their help and courtesy extended to us at all times.



Patrick Driscoll

Chairman

Signed on Behalf of the Members of the Visiting Committee to Wheatfield Prison.