

Visiting Committee Annual Report 2016

The Visiting Committee has pleasure in presenting their annual report for the year ending 2016.

The Visiting Committee convened on a monthly basis throughout the year and members did on occasion present with unannounced visits. On each occasion the committee members were welcomed and facilitated with free access to all areas of the estate. Only one offender requested to meet the committee during the Year who was querying his lack of Temporary Release, the Committee wrote to the Director of Operations on his behalf and invited the prisoner back if he required further assistance, the Committee did on occasion chat informally with members as they toured the site. During the year there were occasions when formal meetings could not take place because of a shortfall in members. We are pleased to report that the committee Chaired by Mr. Thomas Gregan. Mr. Gregan has requested consideration to appoint more members to ensure the minimum quorum number is always available to conduct meetings. The committee wishes to extend their thanks and appreciation to Ms. Marie O Rourke who has completed her involvement with the committee.

The committee is pleased to report local management's continued commitment to deliver the highest standards in offender sentence management. With the ongoing financial limitations being imposed across the prison service it is a credit to the excellent work and leadership of Governor Conal Healy and his team that the Centre continues to maintain and introduce new initiatives. This year has witnessed a very notable increase in positive interaction with the community. A higher increase in offender's positive participation with local community projects has proven to be a real success. An excellent working relationship has developed with The Wicklow Partnership which has opened doors to the wider community to what this Centre has to offer. One project that has grown since its introduction three years ago is the

Tinahely Show. A total of seventeen offenders were granted day release to assist the voluntary committee deliver an excellent show this year. Where possible the wide range of expertise available is utilised in full and ensures offenders with skills can maintain and display their craft. Members of the show committee came to the Centre a few weeks after the event to share a meal with the work party. It was wonderful to witness the genuine appreciation and friendly interaction between the individuals present.

A number of committee members did attend a visiting committee training day in the Irish Prison Service Training Centre. Mr. Gregan also attended the visiting committee Chairs meeting. The gatherings are an ideal occasion to net-work with other committee members.

Addiction Counsellor

The full time position is now assigned to Ms. Camilla Walsh. Camilla is a dedicated counsellor who is respected by the offenders and noted as a trusted listener. Camilla has introduced an induction/awareness meeting with all new committals – advising of all services etc. available. A number of addiction related programmes did take place during the year.

Visitors

The committee wish to extend our thanks to Mr. Jim Gavin Manager of the Dublin Senior G.A.A.Team , & players Stephen Cluxton & Michael Darragh Mc Cauley who visited to witness the benefits of Shelton's partnership with the Bóthar charity (Mr. Gavin is a big supporter of the Bóthar project). The committee also welcomed visits from the visiting committees of Wheatfield POD and the Committee visited Castlereagh and Cork prisons during the year.

Programmes

The Dogs for the Disabled is a wonderful initiative which sits well in the community of Shelton. Young dogs, some of which were born in the Dóchas Centre are given to a volunteer offender. The dog is minded like any family pet, sharing the offender's room, recreation time etc. When the dog is noted as suitable for expert advanced training it is removed from the Centre and eventually given to a disabled child. The dogs bring normality, friendship, joy, responsibility and unfortunately sadness when they depart. Research this year conducted by University of Huddersfield has strongly supported the initiative as a positive in offender sentence management. There has being a

number of A.V.P (Alternative to Violence Project) courses run throughout the year with great success with more planned for next year.

Shelton Abbey and Bóthar formed a successful partnership in 2007. To date two initiatives have developed to be a standard yearly event in the Centre's calendar. The arrival of donated calves with the departure of pregnant heifers to needy families and the arrival of young goats for quarantine before onward transfer to selected recipients. To date the experience has not just benefited the disadvantaged families but has generated a deep sense of pride within the Shelton community. Bóthar has become a valued ambassador for the Irish Prison Service and promotes the good work being done in Shelton throughout the world. Another welcome addition to the programme is the animal welfare course. The course is delivered by VIVA (Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance) and is well received by staff and offenders.

Activities

The catering section continues to provide the highest quality of food and rewarding employment for offenders. The regular turnover of offenders ensures a continuous training schedule. Recent catering audits note high standards are being achieved.

The farm is providing a wide variety of positive activities to suitable offenders. The continuous and regular audits ensure best practice is maintained. The mix of Tillage farming and animal welfare enables offenders an experience of a wide variety of skills.

The garden and grounds team continues to deliver the outstanding features of the Shelton estate. Constant improvement and development (weather permitting) of the areas provides a wide variety of skills and experience to interested offenders. A high proportion of offender employment revolves around the farm, grounds and garden.

Some offenders who having obtained accredited training in other institutions find the new skill stops because of restricted availability of work and training courses. The committee would request the Irish Prison Service considers introducing further work & training facilities.

Chaplaincy

Sr. Margaret O' Donovan retired during the year and a Lay Chaplain Catherine Black continues to provide spiritual guidance to the offenders. Catherine organises mass and other religious events and is always available to assist the offenders and staff when required.

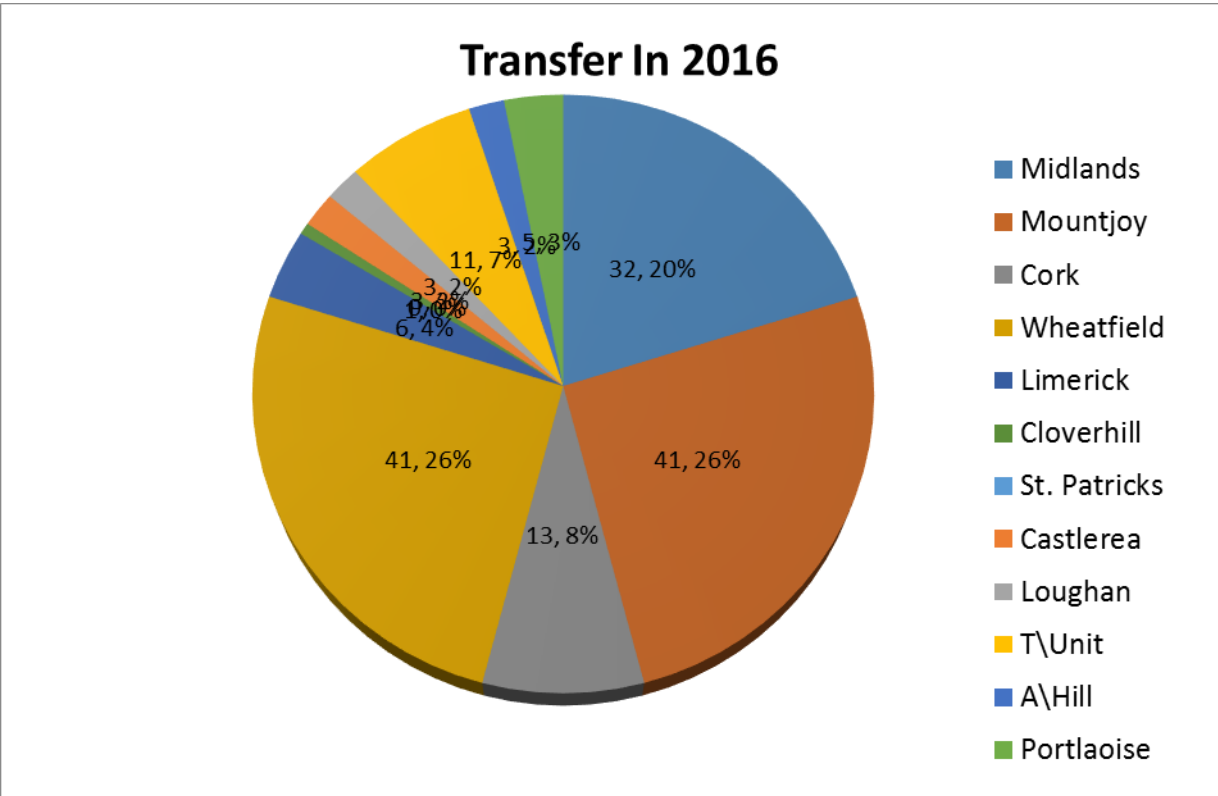
Accommodation

The Open Centre is separated into two accommodation units. The Main Building and Avoca House. The main Building accommodates 56 offenders in dormitory/communal rooms. Most offenders on transfer would be accommodated in the main building and over time progress to single room accommodation in Avoca House. The committee would request that the Irish Prison Service might consider reviewing the dormitory style accommodation. The large rooms might be best served as apartment style units. Long term offenders would benefit from the accommodation in preparation for moving into their own accommodation on release. The shared toilet/shower facilities (Main House) were listed to be refurbished but unfortunately this project still awaits commencement.

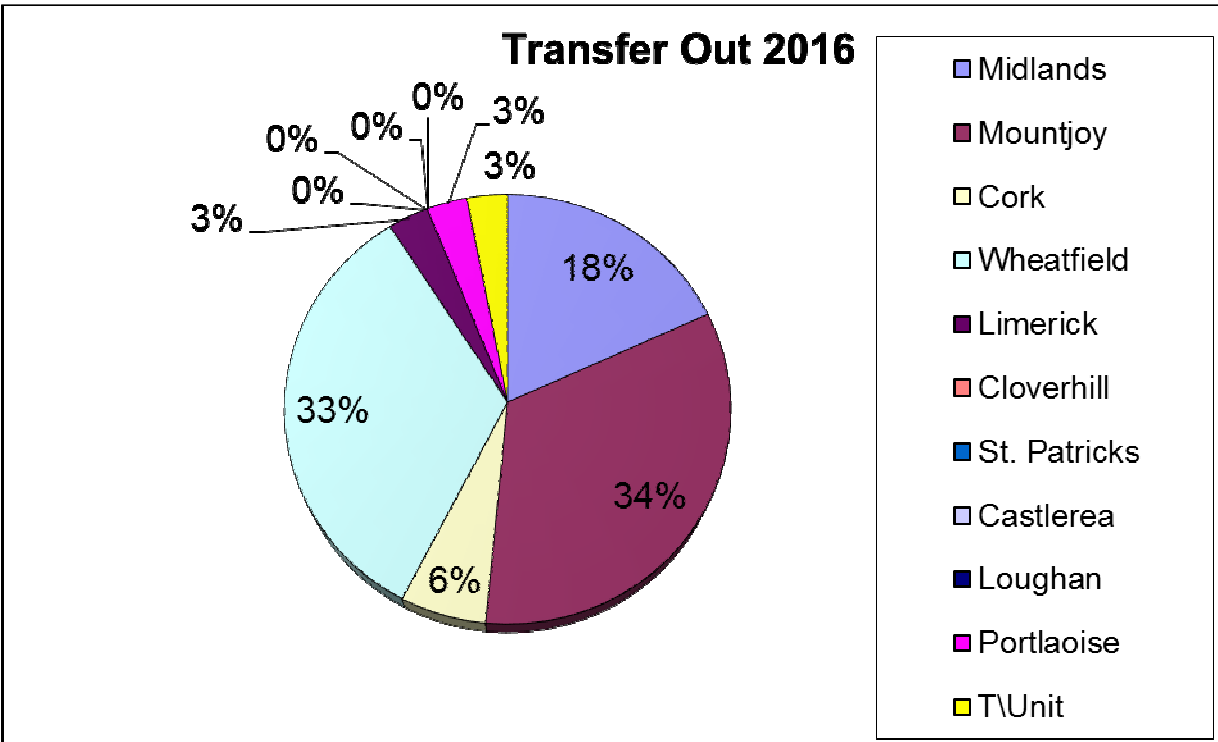
Avoca House also facilitates the Probation Service office, Chaplain & Addiction Counsellor. Psychology service and Psychiatric service is provided on request. A visiting community welfare officer (morning once a week) provides a valued service to the offenders. Offenders being released with a small allowance ensures others are not put under pressure to provide for them. The provision of temporary release programmes well in advance of an offenders release is proving to be an excellent reintegration tool. All offenders must supply an address where they are welcome during the periods of temporary release. The phased release plan allows time for relationships and trust to build. The alternative - immediate release back into the community is not as beneficial.

Offenders Statistics

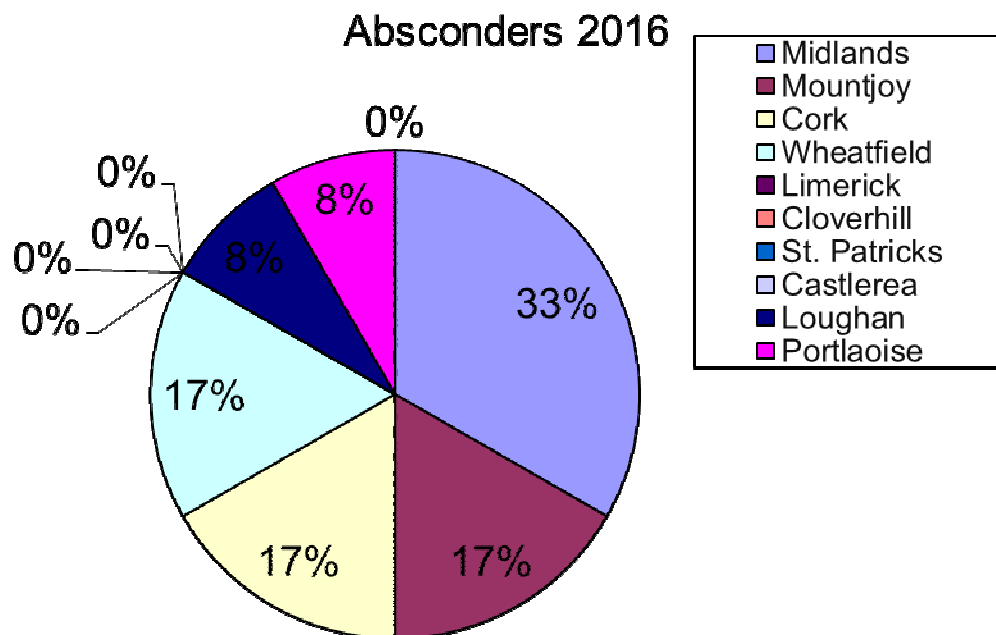
159 offenders transferred In.



33 offenders transferred out



12 offenders absconded during the year with 3 still @ large at year end.



Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
IRISH PRISON SERVICE



SHELTON ABBEY EDUCATION CENTRE

Annual Report 2016

Introduction:

The Education Centre provides offenders with an opportunity to engage with education services while in custody in Shelton Abbey. Courses which lead to certification and locally accredited courses are offered. QQI certified courses are offered at Levels 3, 4 & 5. This enables students to establish themselves on the National Framework of Qualifications with nationally recognised, vocationally orientated, valuable qualifications. Other courses offered provide students with an opportunity to develop new skills and to explore areas of study which are of interest to them.

All levels of educational backgrounds are catered for from Basic Ed. to Open University level. This presents challenges to accommodate a broad range of abilities and ensure that each student benefits from their time in the centre. To achieve this, teachers have had to become flexible and creative to cater for the individual needs of each student. Personal achievement is our core value, irrespective of what level it occurs at.

Education Services were provided by the equivalent of 7.4 whole time teachers. The Education centre operated in the usual academic calendar in addition to a summer programme conducted during the months of June and July. Classes were timetabled from 9.30 - 12.30, 2.15 - 4.15, and in addition, evening classes were conducted from 4.30 - 6.30/7.30, Monday to Thursday.

The total number of offenders enrolled for education courses in 2016 was 115

Options for accredited and non-accredited programmes were offered to all offenders. The primary emphasis is on those with basic educational needs, in order to cater for literacy, numeracy, social skills and occupational skills development.

Facilities

Currently the Education Centre operates in a prefab building which was originally installed as a temporary solution. This building is now in need of replacement with a permanent structure as structural problems are occurring. Restrictions on space also mean class sizes are not adequate to accommodate the demand for certain classes.

Locally Accredited Programmes		
Title of programme:	Throughput in 2016:	Comments:
Adult Guidance & Counselling	228	Preparation for release Referrals for employment, training & further education
ESOL Programme	4	English classes for non-Irish students
Driver Support	62	RSA/NDLS accredited
ABE	26	Basic education (Literacy 1-1, small groups)
General English	13	Education Course
Family Reading	25	
Sculpture in Wood	33	Skills Course
Art Workshops	24	Skills Course
General Art	22	Skills Course
Geography/Environmental Studies	10	Education Course
Cookery	12	Skills Course
History	12	Education Course
PE	74	Swimming, Hillwalking, Spinning, Gym, Nutrition, Pilates

QQI ENTRIES 2016				
COMPONENT	REF	LEVEL	JUNE	DEC
Computer Aided Druggeting	5N1604	5	9	3
Word Processing	5N1358	5	7	0
Mathematics	4N1987	4	1	0
Health & Fitness	3N0531	3	2	0
Word Processing	3N0588	3	8	3
Working with Wood	3N0589	3	8	5
Craft Mosaic	3N1039	3	8	0
			43	11

Internet access for inmates has been available in Shelton Abbey since 2014, with user accounts set up on an ongoing basis during 2016. The purpose of this access is to assist both teachers and inmates by having suitable sites available to further enhance the quality of the education experience and also to research employment, education and training opportunities.

Adult Basic Education Developments

Storybook Dads;

The Storybook Dads programme is continuing to be offered to inmates in Shelton to support family literacy and storytelling for their children. The dads prepare to read and record a children's story and the Librarian does the follow-up stage, including the link to Dartmoor Prison, U.K. A personal CD is returned to each dad and is then sent to the family. This facility has been expanding.

To complement this, we offered children's books sessions during the pre-Christmas season to facilitate inmates to book-browse and take time making choices for their children. Advice was available if wished. Some of the dads had ideas on developing this theme next Christmas.

Physical Education & Fitness Training;

As part of the P.E. programme, two swimming courses were held during 2016 catering for up to 13 participants per course.

Spinning classes were held in Coral leisure centre on Thurs. mornings.

Weekly Pilates and Abs training sessions were held in the visiting hall.

Personalised programmes and supervised gym sessions were held on Mon. And Fri. afternoons

Two regular soccer sessions were timetabled per week off-site, coordinated by the Education Centre and supervised by the Gym Officer.

Fitness classes and a weight management programme, including nutrition, were held weekly throughout the year.

Hillwalking programme resumed for spring/summer term also coordinated by the Education Centre and the Gym officers.

Horticulture

QQI Level 3 Planting & Potting and Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production components were delivered in cooperation with IPS staff. A very impressive crop of vegetables was produced with those involved able to pick their own produce and use it or give it to family on visits.

A trip to Colclough Walled Garden in Wexford took place in June and this was once again very interesting and informative. A group of 6 prisoners were taken for the day trip.

Guidance Counselling

To prepare for post-release life many choose to link with the Guidance Counselling Service offered by the Education Centre. This service prepares a plan for each individual based on what is best suited to them. The service has at its core the interest of the individual and to guide them on whatever path they choose.

Achievements/ Events in 2016

Tinahely Courthouse Arts Centre visited Shelton for Arts Day in September and facilitated a drumming workshop before presenting a play to the inmates that evening. Creative Writing workshop took place for two weeks in September and was well attended and very successful

Summer Activities/Projects

Physical Education and Exercise;

Weekly Pilate's classes were available.

Spinning, Pilates and Abs classes continued as well as two gym sessions.

Hillwalking groups were taken on day walks in the surrounding mountains, which proved to be very popular.

History;

A history project ran for two weeks in June.

English;

English classes continued for two weeks in June and also two weeks in July.

Wood Sculpture;

Wood Sculpture classes continued for all of June and all of July.

Stone Carving Workshop;

Due to the success of the Arts Council Artists in Prison Scheme in 2015, the artist James Horan returned in 2016 to participate in another stone carving workshop from June 13th to 24th.

Using Irish limestone, the main aim of the project was to introduce some basic stone carving techniques and skills to the learners participating in the workshop. This was done by completing individual small scale relief carvings based on a subject of personal interest to the learners and also by carving relief designs and lettering into a larger 3D sculptural site specific piece. The 3D piece took the form of a bird bath which was placed in the centre of the rose garden and is a beautiful addition to the grounds.



Stone Carving Project in place in Shelton rose garden

Horticulture

As part of the Horticulture programme a vegetable garden was developed in early 2015 , This continued in 2016. This allowed the Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production component (QQI L3) to proceed. A very impressive crop of vegetables was produced with those involved able to pick their own produce and use it or give it to family on visits.

A trip to Colclough Walled Garden in Wexford took place in June and this was once again very interesting and informative. A group of 9 prisoners were taken for the day trip.

Guidance Counselling

To prepare for post-release life many choose to link with the Guidance Counselling Service offered by the Education Centre. This service prepares a plan for each individual based on what is best suited to them. The service has at its core the interest of the individual and to guide them on whatever path they choose. College applications were processed for 21 offenders with some released on CRS to attend colleges.

Achievements/ Events in 2016

Red Cross;

The Red Cross is noted as a valued initiative and generates great support from offenders and staff. The group continued to be very active throughout the year.

Activities included;

- Adapting to a new environment
- Induction packs for new committals
- Violence reduction workshops
- Aware life skills programme
- Local community interaction

Summer Activities/Projects

Physical Education and Exercise;

Once again fitness is regarded as high on the activities of most offenders. With this in mind weekly Pilates, Spinning and Abs-classes as well as two extra gym sessions was available. Hillwalking groups went on day walks in the surrounding mountains, which proved to be very popular.

A history project ran for two weeks in June.

English classes continued for two weeks in June and July.

Wood Sculpture classes continued June and July.

Irish Red Cross programme successfully continued with project work and presentation preparation for a national meeting in Wheatfield.

The Artist James Horan visited Shelton Abbey Prison for a two week period under the Arts Council Artist in Prison Scheme to supervise a stone carving workshop.

Health Care

Doctor's McCabe & Buggle provide the Medical cover, The Doctors parade continues Monday – Friday mornings and all medical requirements are facilitated through their office. Most offenders are considered suitable to have "In procession medication". The initiative allows suitable offenders (under contract) to retain medication and self-medicate. There is no healthcare staff available during the hours of 8pm – 8am. There is no dedicated Psychologist or Psychiatrist assigned to the Centre. A review of the Psychology service did take place during the year which will see an improvement of the current service provision

Probation Service

The Probation Service continued to deliver a wonderful service to the offenders. The Community Return Scheme (CRS) has been one of the most positive/progressive initiatives witnessed by the committee. The Centre is one of the highest providers of candidates for CRS and this is in no part due to the dedicated work of the Probation team. The probation officer is still expected to deliver other services to offenders and is in constant demand.

The committee once again wish to convey their appreciation to Governor Conal Healy and his staff for the professional and dedicated service provided to offenders during their stay in this Centre. There has been a remarkable improvement to this facility in the last couple of years and we feel this should be developed further. Other visiting committees have visited the Centre during the year and have noted and praised the work being done. With the recent capital investment to enhance the prison estate i.e. Mount joy, Cork and Limerick we feel consideration should now be given to remove the use of dormitory style accommodation in this Centre. We feel single room accommodation best prepares offenders for release. The Centre lacks other facilities that might be considered in future capital investment plans i.e. Training workshops, Gym hall, Church, enhanced visitor's area. We do note however that there are ongoing upgrades with the refit of a new Shower/ Toilet in the Main House and the refit of the Shower & toilets in Avoca House. The addition of sheds in the various areas to replace antiquated structures. That in time will add valued space to upskill prisoners and enable them to return to society better trained and rehabilitated to engage in a positive matter upon their eventual release.

May we take this opportunity to thank the in-reach services, families, friends and offenders who we have found to be respectful and courteous during our visits. This Centre offers a positive environment and a progressive location to best prepare offenders to successfully reintegrate back into society.

Signatures:

Mr Thomas Gegan (Chairperson) _____

Mr Richard Codd. _____

Mr Thomas Healy _____

Mr Anthony Lawlor _____

Ms Marie O' Rourke _____