

Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee Annual Report 2003

Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report for the year 2003

We held a total of 11 meetings this year, all of which were well attended. All members made themselves available to offenders before each meeting by walking around the building and dealt with all queries made to them. We have always observed a very good relationship between offenders and all other agencies within Shelton Abbey during those tours of the Institution.

Shelton Abbey is an open Prison with dormitory type accommodation catering for 56 offenders.

The grounds and gardens are kept in excellent condition by the staff and offenders. This year the glasshouse was fully refurbished and will be used to train offenders about propagation of plants. Much work was done on the canal and pond which has greatly improved and enhanced the gardens. Each year the grounds staff and offenders cut timber to give to the needy in the Arklow area on behalf of St. Vincent de Paul.

The farm produced a great harvest of crops again this year. It was with great sadness that on the 8th November the farm manager A.C.O. Sean Kelly was tragically killed while cutting timber. Sean had run the farm for the last twenty years and varied the crops each year as the need required. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues and offenders who worked with him.

The Education unit as always plays a very important role in the running of Shelton Abbey by providing excellent range of courses. It is staffed by a Supervising Teacher who has 2 full time and 6 part time teachers giving day and evening classes, these consist of Woodwork, Art & Craft, Computers, French, Maths, Music, English, Literacy, Cookery, Physical Education and Pottery. The classes are always well attended. There was an arts and crafts exhibition held each year but both the Woodwork and Art Teachers were replaced this year and the new teachers were given time to adjust to their new positions so it is hoped to have an exhibition early next year.

A number of Safe Pass courses were held during the year, this allows offenders on their release to take up employment in the building industry.

During the school holidays offenders take part in hill walking with officers in charge also on a number of occasions they were brought by the Chaplain to Glendalough. A sports day was held in July which was a great success. Many of the offenders families attended and the officers set up a barbecue to provide food for everybody.

The committee visited the Curragh Prison in May this year. The visit was most informative and enjoyable and all the committee were impressed with the facilities there. We were met by the Assistant Governor who gave us an outline of

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the type of offender held there and their daily routine. These trips are most important to committees as they can give and receive ideas from each other.

During the year the Chaplain Sr. Mary Dawson was replaced by Sr. Barbara Perry. She looks after the spiritual needs of the offenders and will make contact with their families when required. She at times takes offenders out on visits to their homes or to visit family graves.

Probation & Welfare Officer Catherine Doyle attends Shelton Abbey daily and caters for the welfare needs of offenders. She will assist them in making out employment applications and setting up interviews.

The Doctor attends daily to care for the medical needs of offenders. He does a medical check on all committals on arrival here and will refer those who need specialist treatment to outside clinics. The medical orderlies carry out the duties of medical assistance at all other times.

Review meetings are held monthly and each offender is discussed and recommendations are made as to their future. Decisions are made to grant offenders periods of Temporary Release. Heads of all agencies attend those meetings along with an Irish Prison Service official.

Mr. John Murphy was re-appointed to the committee in February and since then nobody else has been appointed. There are only 10 members on this committee.

In November this year Chief Officer Patrick Corcoran was promoted to Assistant Governor in the Midlands Prison we wish him the best of luck in his new post and thank him for his assistance during the year. His position has been taken up by Teresa Mc Cormack who was promoted from Fort Mitchell.

It is with great regret that you have announced that if the current negotiations are not successful the running of Shelton Abbey will be taken out from the Irish Prison Service and given over to another authority on 1st January 2004. The staff here have built up an excellent knowledge of working with offenders in an open environment. This expertise is only something that can be gained from working alongside offenders. In closing the open centres you cut off an important lifeline for long term offenders who can avail of the rehabilitative facilities and use it as a stepping stone back into society.

The committee would like to thank most sincerely Governor Martin Corrigan, Asst. Governor Christopher Breen and secretary to the committee Clerk 1 Bernard Quinn for all their help throughout the year.

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Patrick Fitzgerald

Collette Douglas

Kevin Fitzgerald

John Murphy

John Byrne

Oonagh Doyle

Hugh O'Keeffe

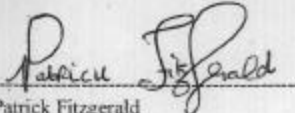
Pat Doran

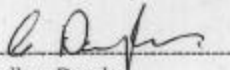
Kathleen Maher

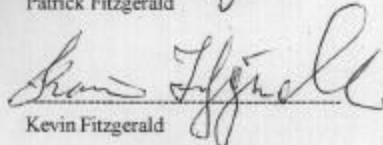
P. J. Sheridan

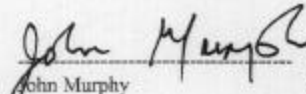
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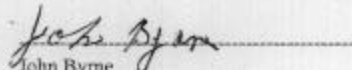
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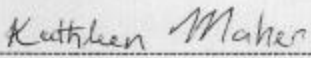

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