

## **Training Unit**

**This is the report of The Visiting Committee to The Training unit for the year ending 31st December 2005.**

### **Meetings:**

**There were twelve formal monthly meetings held during the year and all were well attended. Two committee members visited the Institution individually each month until September 2005. Following correspondence from Prisons Policy Division the committee agreed that only one member would visit unannounced each month from October 2005 until the end of the year. Reports on these visits were made at the following monthly meeting and favourable comments were made regarding management, staff and the good order of the Institution. The positive attendance record at meetings and the quality of discussion by members demonstrate the interest and concern of the committee during the past year. The committee had one formal meeting with Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlan, The Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention.**

### **Cleanliness:**

**The committee noted that offenders rooms were clean and bright as were all surrounding areas and were particularly impressed with the clean and professional manner in which the kitchen operated. The excellent presentation of food was also noted by the members.**

### **Maintenance:**

**The committee appreciate that maintenance is ongoing and carried out to the highest of standards and welcome the fact that offenders work with trades staff in painting and other trades areas. The committee are aware that many proposed projects are on hold due to the proposed transfer of the entire Mountjoy complex to Thornton Hall. Improvements continue to be made to enhance the living and working environment of both offenders and Staff. A new key system has been formulated whereby each offender will hold a key to his room thus making him more responsible for the condition of his room and his belongings. The committee are also very impressed with the new staff shower and locker room. The members noted that the dining hall has been completely repainted and fitted with new floor covering. The committee note improvements in fire prevention and safety and welcome the new sprinkler system which was commissioned in June.**

### **Industrial Training:**

**The committee visited The Industrial Workshops on a regular basis throughout the year and appreciate that there is an excellent standard of training being administered in a modern training facility. The committee are pleased to note that the workshops continue to provide accredited training in welding, computers, electronics and engineering. The committee compliment the Industrial Instructors on the professional manner with which they discharge their duties. Driving tuition continues to be a very beneficial course and a very important qualification in seeking employment on release. The committee noted that a large number of trainees have progressed to avail of outside training programmes with such bodies as Fás, PACE, Treble R Industries, The Pathways Project and The Institutes of Technology. The committee recognise that The**

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**Connect Project continues to operate as part of the multidisciplinary approach within the Unit.**

### **Education:**

**A number of educational events were held during the year which were all well attended. Arts week was once again a tremendous success with a full programme of events which included, a visual arts exhibition displaying the work of various art students within the unit. The Public speaking final has become a permanent fixture on the school calendar and once again proved to be a great event. A large number of offenders participated in health and fitness weeks held in the unit. The Provision of evening educational facilities continue for students who are unavailable during the day. A summer programme of sports activities was provided during the summer recess, which included basketball, volleyball and football classes. The committee appreciate the diverse educational needs of offenders within the Institution and compliment the teaching staff for providing such a wide range of certification opportunities to their students. The Education Unit also caters for addiction study courses, parenting courses, pre-release courses and literacy courses. The committee noted that The Education Unit organised a comprehensive series of lectures and workshops involving outside agencies during the year.**

### **General:**

**The committee wish to thank Mr. Patsy Geraghty who finished his term as a member of the committee in November 2005 and welcome Mr. Paul Mc Auliffe, Mr Donal Doran and Mr. Christopher Faulkner as members of the committee for the coming years. On World Book Day 2004, Mr. Noel Coade launched an initiative to provide The Training Unit with a Library Club. The Library fund continues to grow with the full support of the committee. In the past this committee has expressed their disappointment that there had been no significant improvements in psychiatric, psychological, welfare and counselling services. The committee welcome the appointment of a full time psychologist to The Training Unit. The committee views this appointment as a significant improvement. The committee wish to extend their gratitude to all the after care projects available to offenders in the Institution. Offenders have been placed in Coolmine, ACRG, The Bond Project, The Bridge Project, Matt Talbot Trust, AA groups, NA groups and many Local rehabilitation Groups.**

### **Conclusion:**

**The Training Unit continues with its efforts to assist offenders reintegrate into society through its educational and work training facilities. The Committee were pleased to note the high number of offenders who were granted daily temporary release to attend external training courses and also the numbers who were granted periods of temporary release to visit their families. The committee compliment the commitment of The Governor and staff and auxiliary services to maintain a drug free environment within the institution. The committee would like to take this opportunity to extend their thanks to The Governor, Staff, Medical Officers, Probation and Welfare Service, psychologist, teachers, chaplains and all outside agencies associated with The Training Unit, for their help and co-operation throughout the year.**

## **Training Unit**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ms Geraldine Foster (Chairperson)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ms Kathleen Diamond**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mr. Noel Coade**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ms Deirdre Kenneally**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ms Tras Honan**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mr. Patsy Geraghty.**

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