

WHEATFIELD PRISON

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Visiting Committee to Wheatfield Prison

2004

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 ending 2004.

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 51 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 821 prisoners were processed through the work & training area during 2004. Inmates were awarded certificates for successfully completing their training programme at a range of skills including ... Food Hygiene, Elementary Cookery, Welding, Manual Handling, Joinery, Computer skills ,Indexing, Safe Pass and in each case the certification body was an external agency. Every Work and Training area is now offering F.E.T.A.C. Approved courses.

In 2004, we opened the new modernised Welding Unit and Paint and Decorating Unit. Presently our new modern Laundry facility is preparing to open with Inmates receiving the Guild of Launderer's Certification Training. Community assistance programmes included the provision of furniture for 2 houses occupied by Inmates who on release have no fixed abode. This included beds ,tables, chairs, locker, wardrobes and lamps. All made by Staff and Inmates of the Joinery Workshop. The Daisy Foundation for the Homeless in Dublin received four drive - way lamps made by the Metal Workshop for auction where they received in excess of €1500.00 Spina Bifida Ireland received 4 hand made bed side lamps made by the Inmates in the Joinery Unit to raise funds for them. The Print Unit helped many charities by printing tickets and draw cards etc.

Efforts of the Work and Training Team resulted in the Prison receiving coveted awards and recognition.

- 1. Overall Food and Safety Hygiene Award Winners 2004.**
- 2. EQUA Emerald Hygiene Award.**
- 3. Maximum grade of 5 A's in the Annual Failte Ireland Catering Audit.**
- 4. NSAI ISO 9001 surveillance audit and NSAI IS 343 surveillance Audit, both Recommended that Wheatfield remain certified with standards achieved.**

Education Unit

Wheatfield Education Unit Report for Visiting Committee 2004

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 371 Inmates, 245 are currently time tabled for classes. The Education Unit provided classes 5 days and 4 evenings per week, from September to the end of July. Classes

were equally divided between segregated and non- segregated Prisoners. A total of 521 students were time tabled and attended classes during this period. The CDVEC employs 31 Teachers in Wheatfield; 11 of whom are full time.

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.

There were two death's in custody. (16/1/04) Gavin Whelan was found unconscious in his cell by the Night Guard. He was taken to Hospital but pronounced dead a short time later. (28/4/04) James Mc Creevey Simpson.

May they Rest in Peace.

The Committee were pleased to see that the new "All Weather" Pitch is now completed and in regular use.

We were informed that permission has been granted for a new block in the grounds of Wheatfield Prison. The Committee would welcome any advance in building that would be of benefit to Inmates.

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.

Queries from Inmates in General were not generally of a critical nature which in itself is a testament to the smooth running of Wheatfield Prison. Those that were deemed most urgent were always acted upon without delay by Management. The Committee feel that the provision of extra Dental Facilities for Inmates is an area that perhaps needs review.

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.

Phil Sheridan & Rena Donaghy
Signed on Behalf of the Members of the Visiting Committee to Wheatfield Prison.