

9.12.2003.

**Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report  
For year ending December 2002.**

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**The Minister For Justice, Equality & Law Reform,  
72/76 St Stephen's Green,  
Dublin 2.**

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We the Visiting Committee to Arbour Hill Prison have pleasure in submitting herein our Annual Report for year ending December 2003.

**The Committee.**

The Committee met on the second Tuesday of each month, additionally two committee members visited the prison every month. Meetings were very well attended and all areas of the prison were inspected after the monthly meeting.

*Arbour Hill Prison offers a wide range of facilities to its internees*

**Medical Services.**

The prison continues to be served by a broad range of medical services:

- ✓ 24 hour Medical Orderly/Nurse cover.
- ✓ A G.P. five days a week.
- ✓ A resident Psychologist
- ✓ A visiting Psychiatrist\*.
- ✓ Dental care provided by Dublin Dental Hospital.
- ✓ Visiting Psychotherapist.
- ✓ Visiting Chiropodist.
- ✓ Optician as required.

\*Notwithstanding the above the absence of a dedicated Psychiatrist is regrettable.

In light of the many therapeutic courses undertaken at Arbour Hill it is imperative that a second Psychologist be permanently assigned. At present the resident Psychologist is by necessity primarily occupied in the delivery and co-ordination of therapeutic courses including the 'Sex Offenders Treatment Programme'. Arbour Hill Prison has an allocation of two Psychologists to provide for one to be dedicated to individual and other non programme treatment while the other deals primarily with programme related work. As a consequence of this shortfall there is little opportunity for individual work and this has to be a major cause for concern in a prison where a majority of the inmates are in acute need of therapeutic intervention. This Committee is of the view that this is an intolerable and unacceptable situation that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### **Probation & Welfare.**

Arbour Hill has an allocation of two full time Probation & Welfare officers. For almost all of the past year only one Probation & Welfare Officer has been available to meet an ever increasing workload including participation in the delivery of on site therapeutic courses. There is a grave need for this situation to be addressed urgently as the category of offender housed here places exceptional demands on this service.

### **Treatment Programmes.**

Arbour Hill currently offers the following therapy based programmes:

- ♦ ***Thinking Skills Programme.***
- ♦ ***Group Skills Programme.***
- ♦ ***Sex Offenders Therapy Programme.***
- ♦ ***'Lifers' Programme.***

All of the above with the exception of the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme are delivered by a multidisciplinary team consisting of Teachers, Prison Staff and Probation & Welfare Officers under the supervision of the Psychology Service. The Sex Offenders Programme is delivered by a dedicated Psychologist and Welfare Officers.

### **Recommendations.**

- ❖ *The development of a strategic policy document on the Treatment & Management of Sex Offenders.*
- ❖ *Sex Offenders Programme to be enlarged and fully supportive aftercare programme be established.*
- ❖ *Arbour Hill's Psychiatric and Psychological Services be enhanced and extended and existing shortfall in Psychologists be addressed immediately.*
- ❖ *In light of the specific difficulties pertaining to a sex offender population that a third Probation & Welfare officer be allocated to Arbour Hill Prison.*
- ❖ *Active sentence management for sex offenders combined with structured release system for offenders who have successfully completed the relevant course(s).*
- ❖ *DNA profile of all sex offenders be collated and retained.*

The committee wish to record their admiration and support for the above programmes and would hope to see these initiatives broadened and extended when resources permit.

### **The Industrial Area..**

The industrial area consisting of Printing, Braille, Fabrics and Woodwork are an admirable example of commitment, enthusiasm and dedication. The work output is impressive in both volume and quality. The industrial staff and the prisoners in their charge are to be complimented and it is to be hoped that ongoing attempts to gain certification from the relevant authorities will be successful.

### *Projects.*

The woodwork shop completed a major contract for the Special Olympics Project during 2003. All of the podiums used in the Special Olympics were made in Arbour Hill, each of the larger podiums consisted of 25 sections and there were 22 of those produced.

The woodwork shop also continued to provide the furnishing for Barrettstown Gang Camp and aided in the fitting out of the child care facility attached to the visits area at Cloverhill Prison.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to record their sincere appreciation to the prisoners and staff who gave so willingly of their talent, time and energy.

### **The Kitchen:**

The operating standards in the care and presentation of food is more than compatible to any modern canteen or hotel kitchen. Visiting Committee visitors continue to be impressed by the standard, variety and quality of food prepared and served within the prison. A number of prisoners have completed the 'Leanardo' course under the auspices of CERT.

### **Spiritual Care.**

The prison is served by a full time Catholic Chaplain and a number of visiting Chaplains of other denominations. Interaction with the other support services plays a large part in what could be described as a high profile approach to the spiritual care and well being of the prison population.

### **Cladded Cells.**

Arbour Hill has only one Cladded cell which is never used in a security context and of the twelve occasions it was used during the past year ten were at the request of the prisoner, one on the recommendation of the psychiatrist and one on the recommendation of the medical officer. The Committee are of the view that the use of such a facility tends to be misconstrued in the media and consequently misunderstood by the general public. Any future decision to discontinue using such facilities warrants careful consideration and particular emphasis should be placed on what the consequences of same might be.

### **Waste Management.**

In advance of a service wide *Waste Management Strategy* under the auspices of the recently appointed *Waste Services Manager* Arbour Hill Prison has implemented its own waste management plan which has reduced its landfill output by 50%.

### **Observations..**

In light of the prevalence of sensational media reports it is incumbent on this Committee to record its concern at the grossly inaccurate and indeed sometimes totally untrue reports emanating from the various media. Retractions and apologies buried in miniature sections on page seven are hardly adequate to redress front page headline stories when it is admitted that the story in question is without foundation! Similarly TV and radio reports based on what at best could be described as suspect sources and presented without any attempt at verification leads to grossly unfair, untrue and wildly inaccurate portrayal of situations.

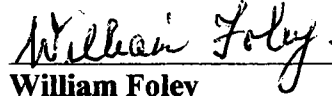
The general public would be both confounded and confused to know that Arbour Hill Prison is to all intents and purposes *drug free*, has not had a single suicide attempt this year and not one violent incident of note. The Visiting Committee would like to sincerely compliment the management and staff not only on a well run prison but more particularly that in a time of limited resources and difficult circumstances they continue to create and sustain a friendly atmosphere and a caring ethos in the most unlikely of settings.

We would also like to record our appreciation to the many organisations and individuals who, in the course of the year provided support and assistance to prisoners and management alike.

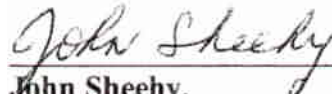
In conclusion we wish to sincerely thank the Governor and his staff for their courtesy and helpfulness to us during the year.

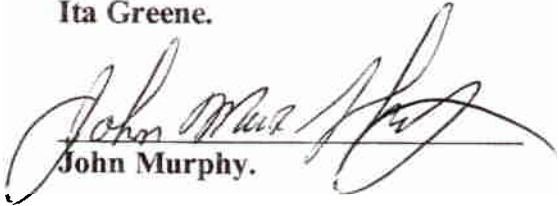
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Donal O'Meara.

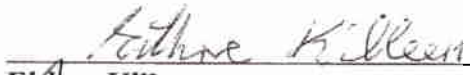
  
William Foley

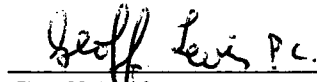
Ita Greene.


  
John Sheehy.

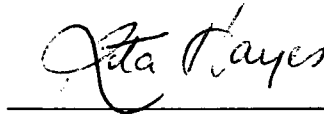
  
John Murphy.


  
Seamus Quinn.

  
Eithne Killeen.

  
Geoff Levis.

  
Jim O'Hanrahan.

  
Rita Hayes.

  
Tom Flemming. (Chairman).