

# VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2011

**Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee have pleasure in presenting their report for the year 2011.**

The Visiting Committee played an active role in the life of the Centre and met on 12 occasions during the course of the year under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pat Fitzgerald. Members were facilitated in regard to their meetings and regular visits. offenders made requests to see the Visiting Committee during the course of the year.

## **Addiction Counsellor**

The Addiction Counsellor continues to prove highly effective in terms of linking in with offenders who are committed here with Addiction issues.

## **Catering**

Training continued for both our Catering staff and offenders. A total of 13 offenders were employed daily in our kitchen and were heavily involved in food preparation, records, cleaning, serving etc. An external audit of our catering services was carried out in July and a very positive result was attained in that the Kitchen retained it's Q Mark status.

## **Chaplaincy**

Spiritual Care to offenders during the year was provided by Sr Pat Egan, who attended the Centre for 3 days per week in addition to Sunday mornings. Sunday Service was facilitated by Fr Crossan.

## **Avoca House**

Avoca House continues to operate in a manner which promotes the ethos of Shelton Abbey. Offenders graduate to the single cell, ensuite accommodation from the main House in most instances. There are however, allowances made for special case offenders who will transfer directly into Avoca house from the transferring prison. Examples of this category of offender would be an offender serving Life, other long term offenders.

## **Bothar:**

Shelton Abbey once again provided the quarantine for the goats for Bothar in 2011. 300 goats from the Republic and Northern Ireland arrived in Shelton Abbey between 18/10/2011 and the 20/10/2011. All care for the goats is done by the inmates working on the farm and under the supervision of vets from the department of agriculture who come and inspect the goats and supervise the goats being loaded when they are being exported. The 300 goats were exported on the 17/11/2011 when they left Shelton Abbey and started their 85 hour trip to Uganda. The firstly travel by road to Rosslare and then sailed to France where they are unloaded in a liarge centre for 48 hours. They are then reloaded and travel by road to Amsterdam Airport where they are loaded into crates of 50 and put as part of cargo onto a plane for the eight hour flight to Uganda.

21 calves were received on to the farm in March of 2011. These are currently being cared for here by the inmates and will be put in calf to a Friesian Bull from June onwards and will be exported in October. On the 27/10/2011 20 in calf heifers were exported to an orphanage in Romania. On the 12/10/2011 we had a Bothar open day where the farmers who donated the calves are invited back to view their heifer before they are exported. We were honored to have the Doctor from the receiving orphanage in Romania to be present to accept the Heifers and it

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was great to hear first hand the difference the Shelton Heifers were going to make to the lives of so many there.

### Bedding Plants:

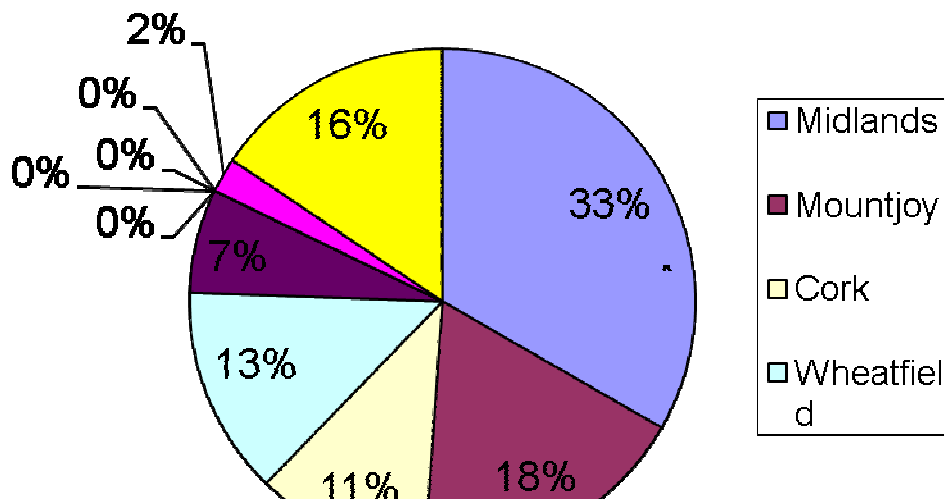
Bedding plants were brought into the poly tunnel on weeks 9, 11, 13, and 17. Inmates planted up all bedding plants and looked after the plants in poly tunnel by watering, fertilizing and hardening off the plants before sale. The bedding plants were sold to Mountjoy, Arbour Hill, Dóchas Centre, St. Patricks, and Cloverhill Prisons. Some local charities also received a donation of flowers on behalf of the Governor. Winter bedding plants were also brought into the poly tunnel in September and the Dublin Prisons was supplied with their winter bedding requirements.

### Offenders Statistics

233 offenders transferred into Shelton Abbey in 2011. An increase of bed capacity remains at 110. There were 45 offenders absconded from Shelton Abbey in 2011 as opposed to 65 in

2011. See attached Chart

**Absconders 2011**



A total of 8 offenders gained external employment locally on a Daily Temporary Release basis. Another 6 were employment locally on a part-time/ seasonal basis.

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## **Educational Activities in 2011**

Educational Services were provided by the equivalent of 7.4 wholetime 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 time tabled from 9.30 – 12.30, 2.15 – 4.15, and in addition, evening classes were conducted from 4.30 – 6.30/7.30 each evening Monday to Friday..

The total number of offenders enrolled for education courses in 2011 was 244.

## **Outdoor Pursuits**

A group of 16 offenders, attended Arklow Leisure Centre for swimming courses accompanied the P.E. teachers and an Officer. Two regular soccer sessions were timetabled per week, coached by the P.E.teacher, Gym Officer and FAI coach. Weekly forest walks took place on Friday afternoons. In June and July a group of 14 offenders went Hill-walking on three occasions, accompanied by an Officer and two P.E. Teachers. Tennis and Volleyball was played, with a successful “Shelton Tennis Tournament” bringing the summer P.E. programme to a conclusion.

## **Summer Projects;**

The summer Woodsculpture project for this year was completed in July by all ten students on this course with our Woodsculpture teacher. Individuals designed and completed relief carving projects. Various other activities included a Drama workshop, Table-Quiz, and Forest-walks. These extra activities were run in conjunction with regular timetabled classes through to the end of July.

**Shannon Trust - ‘Toe by Toe’** – the peer learning project

Toe by Toe is a reading plan, for those who require reading support in custody and it is delivered by prisoners for prisoners.

## **Storybook Dads’**

The ‘Storybook Dads’ project which was introduced in 2010 continued throughout 2011, in conjunction with the local library service

## **Health Care**

The needs of offenders were well catered for during the year and there were no incidents which gave rise to concerns. A local Doctor attends on 5 mornings per week for a two hour period. Outside of these times, the Doctor will attend if required in an emergency type situation. The dental and optical needs of offenders are catered for by appointment in Arklow town. There is a Health Care Staffing compliment of two Nurse Officers rostered back to back from 8am to 8pm, 7 days per week.

## **Library**

*The Library is open 10 hours per week as follows*

Tuesday 10.00 am -12.00pm

Wednesday 10am-12.00pm

Thursday 9.30am 10.30am, 11.00am-12.00pm and 5.00pm-7.00pm

Friday 5.00pm-7.00pm.

## **Psychology**

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There is no fulltime Psychologist since we lost our last Psychologist in October 2010, we have depend on other Psychologists coming here from other Prisons as the need arises.

### **Probation Service**

Our Probation Service continued to operate on a five day week by. The Probation Service provided a full service to all our offenders during the year in addition to playing an active role in multi - disciplinary working and in partnership with the other services delivering rehabilitation programmes and initiatives to offenders.

### **Other Services**

#### **Security**

CCTV and Alarmed External Doors continue to provide added assistance in providing security within Shelton Abbey. The Security Screening Booth at the entrance to Shelton Abbey allows staff to check all visitors re identification, and also allows for the secure storage of visitors mobiles phones, handbags etc. in line with Irish Prison Service guidelines on security. There were 103 mobile phones confiscated, in total for the year.

#### **Staff**

The staffing compliment for Shelton Abbey 53 officers. 5 Staff retired during the year, sadly 1 officer Noel Barney died on 26/03/2011 suddenly. The committee sympathised with the family of Offr Barney and also to the Governor and Staff of Shelton Abbey on their sad loss. To date 3 Offr posts, 1 A.C.O., & 1 Industrial Supervisor Posts have remained unfilled. With a further 4 staff indicating their intent to retire early in the new year, this will bring vacancies here to 9.

#### **Recreation**

With the increase in capacity it was important that efforts were made to improve the recreational facilities available to offenders. Room space became available with re-location of the Tuck Shop. The room was refurbished and set it up as a pool and darts room. This has proved to be popular with offenders during the evenings and at weekends. A fully equipped Gym which is open 7 days per week and managed by 2 qualified Gym Officers. Inmates attend Coral leisure Centre in Arklow on a weekly basis where offenders are taught to swim, play indoor soccer, squash and racquetball. F.A.I. Soccer Skills Course is provided in Shelton Abbey with a Soccer Coach to facilitate said course on 1 afternoon per week.

There are regular Bingo sessions, Table Quiz`s (in conjunction with the Education Unit), Card Drives, Dart Competitions, Soccer Tournaments and Pool Competitions for offenders.

#### **Welding**

In 2011 we started to replace the iron works on the rose garden and made an arched gate along by the bridal path. All works including the painting of the iron works is being carried out on the farm workshop by inmates who have been trained in welding workshops in closed prisons.

#### **Car valeting**

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All Shelton Abbey vehicles continue to be valetted on the farm in the workshop using the specialist tools and machinery

### **Retirements of V C Members**

The terms of 6 members of the committee time on the visiting Committee was concluded during the year.

Mr Fergus Nestor retired on 05 May 2011.

John Kierans 23 June 2011,

Michael Hanrahan 16 November 2011,

Hugh O'Keeffe 16 November 2011,

John Byrne 16 November 2011

Patrick Fitzgerald 01 December 2011

With Mr Sheridan term due to expire on 17/02/2012, the Minister has yet to appoint a new committee

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**P J Sheridan**