

Training Unit Visiting Committee

Annual Report 2011

Visiting Committee

From November 2011 to end February 2012 The above committee had just two members

From end February 2012. Three further members were appointed, and we now have a five-member committee.

January 2011

Assistant Governor Conlon presented a DVD show to the committee outlining new initiative in conjunction with library. It presents offenders reading storybooks to children. It is aimed at building and maintaining relationships between offenders and their children whilst offenders serve their sentences. It is hoped to set up a prison magazine with contributions from offenders serving sentences in prisons throughout the country. A similar type magazine is run by UK prison trust.

February / March 2011

With regard to recent disturbances in Mountjoy Prison, Mr Christopher Faulkner requested Chairperson to write to Director of Operations, IPS as to why no public statement was issued regarding the matter, Reply read out at March meeting and Mr Faulkner was not satisfied. Matter to be further clarified.

Training Unit Library consistently improving under guidance of committee member, Noel Coade.

Committee member Tom Twomey made a generous donation of 22 DVD's to the library. It is hoped to have Easter edition of Training Unit Gazette edited, printed and ready for circulation at next meeting.

April 2011

The issue of Decreased staff numbers within unit was raised by two committee members. Governor Murphy outlined that presently unit had no chief officer, no Clark One and no Detail officer. Concern was expressed at this worrying development. Committee enquired if offenders sent to unit were still screened as to their suitability for training unit. Governor said He must accept whatever offenders IPS deems fit to send him.

May 2011

Chairperson requested forthcoming ART EXHIBITION to be placed on agenda for June Meeting. That it was also agreed that notification of monthly meeting dates be made available to offender population in Training Unit. Committee members express concerns re-doubling up of rooms in training unit. All agreed offenders welfare was of concern to committee and matter to be monitored.

In response to query from committee member Ms. Foster, Assistant Governor Carey advised meeting that six mobile phones were found in recent search of prison.

June / July 2011

Copies of Gazette were distributed by Mr Coade. Comment on same at next month's meeting.

Feedback on magazine was very positive at July meeting.

Three members attended ART EXHIBITION standard of work very high. Three paintings were selected for major exhibition at Kilmainham later in year.

At end of June meeting committee met with offender Thomas Kennedy on personal issue. At July meeting Chairperson advised committee that on legal advice received, complaint was outside remit of committee.

August 2011

Committee member Ms. Foster was dismayed on monthly visit in July to discover she was unable to visit workshops, music room and art room as they were all closed. Chairperson undertook to write to Minister Shatter to request a meeting to discuss future of training unit.

September 2011

Chairperson informed committee she had received clearance from Ms Caron Mc Caffery IPS for members to visit HYDEBANK YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTION in Belfast. 23rd September agreed as date for this visit (attached overview of visit) The visit was very beneficial in terms of comparisons between the two jurisdictions.

October / November 2011

LOUGHAN HOUSE VISITING COMMITTEE chose training unit as location for their annual visit to outside facility. Mr Coade and Mr Twomey were present to greet them on day.

Kitchen

Training unit kitchen is constant source of excellence, Nutritious meals are served daily. Varied choices and individual dietary requirements of all prisoners are taken into consideration.

Maintenance

The Training Unit is painted and decorated on a regular basis by prisoners, giving them a sense of pride in their surroundings. Constant maintenance of the facility is of the highest standard.

The visiting committee would like to thank management and staff for their consideration during 2011 and wish them well for coming year.