

Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee Annual Report 2014

Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee has pleasure in presenting their report for the year 2014.

The Visiting Committee played an active role in the life of the Centre and met on 11 occasions during the course of the year under the Chairmanship of Mr. Thomas Gregan. Mr. Gregan as chairman attended Chairperson meetings in various other prisons throughout the year. Members were facilitated in regard to their meetings and regular visits. No offenders made requests to see the Visiting Committee during the course of the year. There are now 5 Members on the committee with the addition of Ms M O' Rourke. and we need a minimum of 3 members to form a quorum. The chairman has requested more members for the committee. The chairperson has attended quarterly meetings of the Chairs of all VC committees, and has found them very helpful to share ideas & experiences. There was a training day for all VC members in March. We note the good work being done with enhancing of visits in Shelton Abbey by Governor Healy and his Staff. The ongoing initiatives to providing this enhancement is most welcome and greatly encouraged by the committee.

Addiction Counsellor

The Addiction Counsellor(s) 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 its Q Mark status.

Chaplaincy

Spiritual Care to offenders during the year was provided by Canon Cosgrove while we awaited a replacement to Sr Mairead, Sr Margaret O' Donovan arrived in November and is a very welcome addition to the great team here. Sr Margaret attends the Centre for 3 days per week in addition to Sunday mornings. Sunday Service, was facilitated by Canon Cosgrove and latterly Fr Byrne the new P.P. in Avoca.

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.

Farm

Tillage:

47 acres of spring barley was successfully grown in 2014 and harvested on the 02/09/2014 a most yielding 3 tonnes per acre. All work on the crops except for the rolling was completed by Agriculture contractor Des Lane who won the tender for the work.

Due to new department of Agriculture requirements on 'Greening' we now have to sow 2 different crops to satisfy this requirement, so we planted 16 acres of winter barley on the 26/09/2014. This work is also being carried out by Agriculture contractor Des Lane who won the tender for this work also.

1 acre of Rooster potatoes was sown and ½ an acre of mixed veg. was also sown (carrots, parsnips, turnips, onions and peas). All work associated with the potato and vegetable crops was completed by the inmates working on the farm such as ploughing, rotavating, sowing, fertilizing, spraying, harvesting and packaging.

Bothar:

Shelton Abbey once again provided the quarantine for the goats for Bothar in 2014. 144 goats from the Republic of Ireland arrived in Shelton Abbey between 22/09/2014 and the 25/10/2014. 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. 132 goats were exported on the 04/12/2014 when they left Shelton Abbey and started their 6 day trip to Albania by land and sea.

9 goats were lost due to illness whilst in Shelton Abbey and were disposed of in Larry Earls Ltd. Fallen animal collection service. 3 goats were deemed unsuitable to travel and were farmed out for another year until 2015.

22 calves were received on to the farm in March of 2014. 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. We unfortunately lost one calve due to a digestive problem on the 04/11/2014 which was disposed of in Larry Earls Ltd. On the 09/11/2014 21 in calf heifers were exported to Romania. On the 24/10/2014 we had a Bothar open day where the farmers who donated the calves are invited back to view their heifer before they are exported. In 2013 Bothar also ran a 5 module animal husbandry course specifically to do with the work the inmates do with the calf rearing. This was certified by VIVA and 12 Inmates were presented with their certificates on the Bothar open day.

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Perimeter Fence

The perimeter fence being erected between Shelton Abbey and Coillte is nearing completion which consists of metal panelling resting on top of concrete wall effect slabs. The metal panels and the concrete slabs are being manufactured on the farm and it is being erected by the inmates working in the garden. The new perimeter fence is replacing the old chain link fence which has fallen into disrepair over the years due to falling trees and debris.

Hens:

The hen flock was very productive during 2014. They provided enough eggs to supply the kitchen in Shelton Abbey with a fresh supply of free range eggs with the excess being sold to staff and prisoners visitors through our eggspress machine located in the back yard. All work with the hens was completed by the inmates such as cleaning scratch area of house, filling the bell feeders, collecting and recording the eggs. A sample of hen dung is sent and tested every 15 weeks to test for salmonella to comply with the requirements set down by the department of agriculture. A sample of water is tested every 6 months to ensure that it is potable water. We receive an unannounced inspection once a year from the Dept. of Agriculture to ensure that we are complying with all regulations.

The hens are due to be culled and replaced in early 2015 as they are almost 18 months old and productivity is falling.

Pigs

On the 26/02/2014 the 2 pigs were artificially inseminated on the farm. The semen was purchased from Hermitage in Kilkenny. The 2 sow's farrowed on the 22/06/2014. One sow had 12 buns and the other had 15 buns. We then had to get Bord Bia approval status before we could supply any meat factory with the pigs. We had our Bord Bia Audit on the 24/10/2014 and successfully passed. The inmates were involved at all stages of the process from the birth of the buns right up to the slaughtering date. 4 pigs were sold locally and were butchered locally by Christy Byrne in Camolin Co. Wexford. The remainder of the pigs were sent for slaughter to Dawn meats in Waterford on the 17/12/2014. We plan to continue this project in 2015.

Wood workshop:

The wood workshop had another busy year and had a big role in the manufacturing and sanding and varnishing of the benches for the Tinahely Show. They also look after our carpentry needs here in Shelton Abbey.

Football Pitch:

In 2014 we started to make the new football pitch in Shelton Abbey. This field was sprayed off ploughed and has been fenced off and will be completed in 2015.

Gardens**Grow your own Veg. Project**

During the summer months WTO Declan Jordan instructed inmates in the art of growing their own veg. from seed and caring for the veg. through to the harvesting stage which would have involved everything from weeding, thinning, watering etc. He also completed another module on the potting and planting of flowers and shrubs. This was done in conjunction with the education unit and was a Fetec level 3 course. The course was greatly enhanced by the purchasing of a purpose built steel shed. There were 12 vegetable plots in full operation with a full variety of vegetables such as potatoes, peas, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, and cabbage. The vegetable plots were fenced off and a footpath has been laid down also. It is hoped to expand the project even further this year and introduce fruit trees such as raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants. A hedging project is also hoped to be introduced also.

Rockery

An extensive upgrade was completed on the rockery area in 2014. This area had all the paths resurface and the stone replaced. The area was completely weeded and all old and obsolete shrubs were removed and replaced with new suitable shrubs.

Footpaths

Certain footpaths throughout the garden that were in bad repair continued to be repaired throughout 2014. This involved improving the drainage on certain footpaths, digging up the existing chippings putting down teram membrane and resurfacing with new chippings and then edging both sides. Inmates were involved at all stages of the process.

Flower beds and Hanging Baskets

All flower beds and hanging baskets were maintained to a high standard. The plants for these flower beds and baskets were sourced from the poly tunnel on the farm. Inmates were responsible for planting, watering and weeding these beds throughout the summer months. These flower beds and baskets were then taken down in October and filled once again with winter bedding plants such as pansies and primroses again sourced from the farms poly tunnel.

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. Patrick's, 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.

Welding

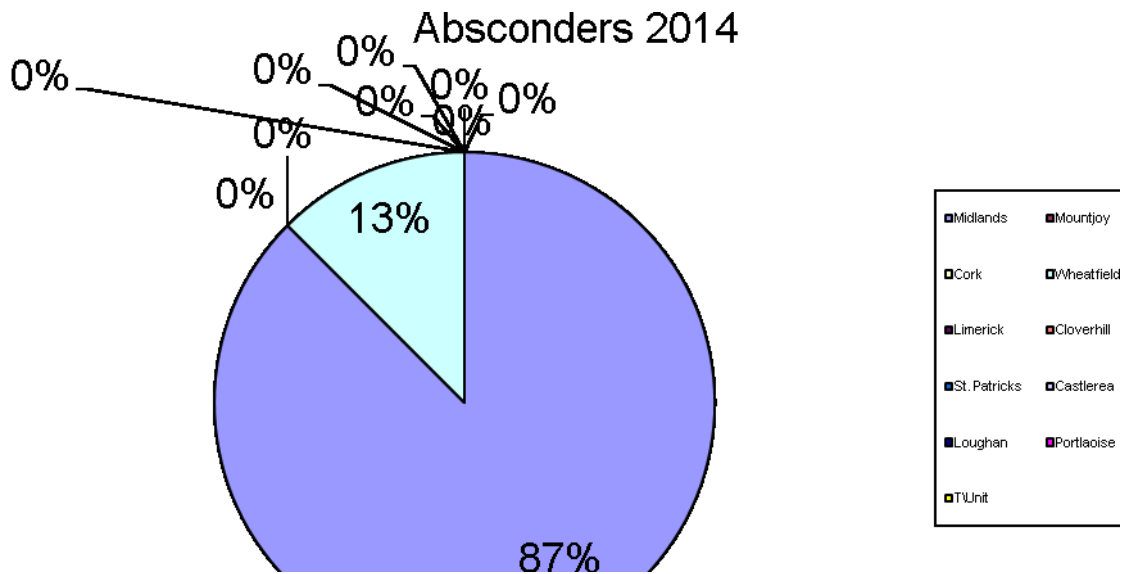
In 2014 we started to replace the iron works on the rose garden and made an arched gate along by the bridal path. All works including the painting of the iron works is being carried out on the farm workshop by inmates who have been trained in welding workshops in closed prisons.

Car valeting

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

Offenders Statistics

181 offenders transferred into Shelton Abbey in 2014, 32 offenders transferred out. An increase of bed capacity to 115 from 01.10.12. There were 08 offenders absconded from Shelton Abbey in 2014 as opposed to 14 in 2013. See attached Chart



A total of 9 offenders gained external employment locally on a Daily Temporary Release basis. Another 10 were employment locally on a part-time/ seasonal basis.

Educational Activities in 2014

SHELTON ABBEY EDUCATION CENTRE

Introduction:

The Education Centre provides offenders with an opportunity to engage with education services while in custody in Shelton Abbey. Courses which lead to certification and locally accredited courses are offered. QQI certified courses are offered at Levels 3,4 & 5. This enables students to establish themselves on the National Framework of Qualifications with nationally recognised, vocationally orientated and valued qualifications. Other courses offered provide students with an opportunity to develop new skills and to explore areas of study which are of interest to them.

All levels of education are catered for from Basic Ed. to Open University level. This presents challenges to accommodate all levels of abilities and ensure that each student benefits from their time in the centre. To achieve this teachers have had to become flexible and creative to cater for the individual needs of each student. Personal achievement is our core value, irrespective of what level it occurs at.

Education 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, Monday to Thursday.

The total number of offenders enrolled for education courses in 2014 was 171

Options for accredited and non-accredited programmes were offered to all offenders. The primary emphasis is on those with basic educational needs, in order to cater for literacy, numeracy, social skills and occupational skills development.

Locally Accredited Programmes		
Title of programme:	Throughput in 2014:	Comments:
Adult Guidance & Counselling	102	Education Course
ESOL Programme	6	English classes for non-Irish students
ABE	34	Basic education (Literacy 1-1, small groups)
General English	14	Education Course
Sculpture in Wood	43	Skills Course
French	4	Conversation French
Spanish	5	Holiday Spanish
Mosaic Programme	65	Skills Course
Art Workshops	62	Skills Course
General Art	14	Skills Course
Geography/Environmental Studies	8	Education Course
Cookery	28	Skills Course
History	12	Education Course
Healthy Lifestyles	4	Education Course

Fetac Entries 2014				
COURSE TITLE	REF	LEVEL	JUNE	DEC
CAD	A20012		8	4
Drawing	3N0581	3	5	0
Woodwork	3N0589	3	9	0
Spanish	3N0868	3	1	0
Communications	3N0880	3	2	0
Word Processing	3N0588	3	7	5
Word Processing	5N1358	5	10	3
Maths	4N1987	4	0	5
Maths	3N0929	3	3	0
Planting & Potting by Hand	3N0891	3	5	0
OutdoorVeg Crop Production	3N0890	3	0	4
Total			50	21

OU Courses 2014	
Course Title	Ref
Introduction to Sport & Fitness	E112
Innovation: Designing for a suitable future	T307
Promoting Public Health: Skills, Perspectives & Practice,	K311
Sport & Conditioning: Science to Practice	E217

IT

Internet access for inmates was piloted in Shelton Abbey during 2014 with a number of user accounts set up during the year. The purpose of this access is to assist both teachers and inmates by having suitable sites available to further enhance the quality of the education experience. This proved successful for all users with some minor problems experienced along the way. It is hoped to develop this further in 2015. Internet access was also provided in more classrooms during the year allowing teachers multiple points of access compared with just one location prior to this. Telephone service was also provided at an extra point which has proved essential for Guidance.

Internet access for the Library is expected in early 2015.

Adult Basic Education Developments

Storybook Dads;

The Storybook Dads programme is continuing to be offered to inmates in Shelton to support family literacy and storytelling for their children. The dads prepare to read and record a children's story and the Librarian does the follow-up stage, including the link to Dartmoor Prison, U.K. A personal CD is returned to each dad and is then sent to the family. This facility has been expanding.

To complement this, we offered children's books sessions during the pre-Christmas season to facilitate inmates to book-browse and take time making choices for their children. Advice was available if wished. Some of the dads had ideas on developing this theme next Christmas.

Physical Education& Fitness Training;

As part of the P.E.programme, two swimming courses were held during 2014 catering for up to 13 participants per course.

Spinning classes were held in Coral leisure centre on Thurs. mornings.

Weekly Pilates and Abs training sessions were held in the visiting hall.

Personalised programmes and supervised gym sessions were held on Mon. And Fri. afternoons

Two regular soccer sessions were timetabled per week off-site, coordinated by the Education Centre and supervised by the Gym Officer.

Fitness classes and a weight management programme, including nutrition, were held weekly throughout the year.

Horticulture

As part of the Horticulture programme a vegetable garden was developed in early 2014. This allowed the Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production component (QQI L3) to proceed. A very impressive crop of vegetables was produced with those involved able to pick their own produce and use it or give it to family on visits. This is an ongoing project and further developments are planned for 2015.

Guidance Counselling

To prepare for post-release life many choose to link with the Guidance Counselling Service offered by the Education Centre. This service prepares a plan for each individual based on what is best suited to them. The service has at its core the interest of the individual and to guide them on whatever path they choose. College applications were processed for 25 offenders with some released on CRS to attend colleges. 5 others attended college on daily TR. Having a realistic plan for life after release is essential and this service has a vital role to play in achieving this.

Achievements/ Events in 2014

Fund-raising projects;

On Oct.23rd, as part of the P.E. programme, a 10Km Run/Walk was organised in Shelton. Over 30 prisoners participated on the day along with a number of officers and teachers. This was a fundraiser in support of CrumlinChildren's Hospital. A total of €1,020 was raised. Certificates of participation for all those involved were presented afterwards. This event is now established as an annual event.

Red Cross;

The Red Cross group continued to be very active throughout the year. Activities included ;

- Adapting to a new environment
- Induction packs for new committals
- Violence reduction workshops
- Aware lifeskills programme

Training courses were also provided with 6 participants receiving National certificates.

Three individuals were successful in becoming Red Cross trainers and are now in a position to offer training to others involved with the Red Cross group.

A very successful Christmas party for a local Active Retirement group was organised by the Red Cross group in mid December. This was organised by the offenders facilitated by the Education Centre, Governor, Chief and Kitchen Staff. Great credit is due to the group for the effort they put in and the guests were most appreciative and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Summer Activities/Projects

Physical Education and Exercise;

Weekly pilates classes were available.

Spinning, Pilates and Abs classes continued as well as two gym sessions.

Woodwork Benches;

Four new benches for the woodwork room were made under the guidance and hard work of our woodwork teacher. This project was undertaken by an enthusiastic group of 10 offenders and a lot of hard work went into it to produce workbenches which will last for many years. Apart from a huge saving in cost this was a great example of teamwork and of production line practice.

History;

A history project ran for two weeks in June.

English;

English classes continued for two weeks in June and also two weeks in July.

Wood Sculpture;

Wood Sculpture classes continued for all of June and all of July.

Red Cross;

Irish Red Cross programme continued with project work and presentation preparation for Wheatfield meeting.

Physical Education;

As part of the P.E. programme, two swimming courses were held during 2013 catering for up to 16 participants per course. In addition, two "Racquets courses" were held on completion of the swimming at the Arklow Coral Sports Centre. T.R. was granted to offenders to attend accompanied by two officers and two P.E. teachers. Each of these courses were very well attended, and they formed part of the FETAC Health Related Fitness L4 course work. 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.

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

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. The Probation Service provides 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 17 mobile phones confiscated, in total for the year.

Staff

The staffing compliment for Shelton Abbey was 48 officers in total. 2 Staff members retired Officer M Curran & Officer J Toner, the committee wished them well in their retirement and thanked them for all assistance to the committee. 2 new members joined the staff Officers K Moran & J Dillon, we welcome them to Shelton Abbey.

Recreation

With the increase in capacity it was important that efforts were made to improve the recreational facilities available to offender's .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 raquetball. 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.

Signatures:

Mr Thomas Gregan (Chairperson) _____

Mr Gerry Delaney. _____

Ms Margaret Short. _____

Mr Richard Codd. _____

Ms Marie O' Rourke _____