

Visiting Committee
Shelton
Abbey Open
Centre
Beech Road,
Arkiow, Co.
Wicklow.

Visiting Committee Annual Report 2017

The Visiting Committee has pleasure in presenting their annual report for the year ending 2017.

The Visiting Committee convened on a monthly basis throughout the year and members did on occasion present with unannounced visits. On each occasion the committee members were welcomed and facilitated with free access to all areas of the estate. The Committee did on occasion chat informally with prisoners as they toured the site. During the year there were occasions when formal meetings could not take place because of a shortfall in members. We are pleased to report that the committee was Chaired by Mr. Thomas Cregan, Mr. Gregan has requested consideration to appoint more members to ensure the minimum quorum number is always available to conduct meetings.

The committee is pleased to report local management's continued commitment to deliver the highest standards in offender sentence management, With the ongoing financial limitations being imposed across the prison service it is a credit to the excellent work and leadership of newly assigned Governor Kathy Hoctor and her team that the Centre continues to maintain and introduce new initiatives. This year has witnessed a very notable increase in positive interaction with the community. A higher increase in offender's positive participation with local community projects has proven to be a real success. An excellent working relationship has developed with The Wicklow Partnership which has opened doors to the wider community to what this Centre has to offer. One project that has grown since its introduction Four years ago is the Tinahely Show. A total of eight offenders were granted day release to assist the voluntary committee deliver an excellent show this year. Where possible the wide range of expertise available is utilised in full and ensures offenders with skills can maintain and display their craft. Members of the show committee came to the Centre

a few weeks after the event to share a meal with the work party. It was wonderful to witness the genuine appreciation and friendly interaction between the individuals present.

A number of committee members did attend a visiting committee training day in the Irish Prison Service Training Centre. Mr. Gregan also attended the visiting committee Chairs meeting. The gatherings are an ideal occasion to meet with other committee members.

Addiction Counsellor

The full time position is now assigned to Ms. Camilla Walsh. Camilla is a dedicated counsellor who is respected by the offenders and noted as a trusted listener. Camilla has introduced an induction/awareness meeting with all new committals — advising of all services etc. available. A number of addiction related programmes did take place during the year.

Programmes

There has being a number of A.V.P (Alternative to Violence Project) courses run throughout the year with great success with more planned for next year.

Shelton Abbey and Bóthar formed a successful partnership in 2007. To date two initiatives have developed to be a standard yearly event in the Centre's calendar. The arrival of donated calves with the departure of pregnant heifers to needy families and the arrival of young goats for quarantine before onward transfer to selected recipients. To date the experience has not just benefited the disadvantaged families but has generated a deep sense of pride within the Shelton community. Bóthar has become a valued ambassador for the Irish Prison Service and promotes the good work being done in Shelton throughout the world.

Activities

The catering section continues to provide the highest quality of food and rewarding employment for offenders. The regular turnover of offenders ensures a continuous training schedule. Recent catering audits note high standards are being achieved.

The farm is providing a wide variety of positive activities to suitable offenders. The continuous and regular audits ensure best practice is maintained. The mix of Tillage farming and animal welfare enables offenders an experience of a wide variety of skills.

The garden and grounds team continues to deliver the outstanding features of the Shelton estate, Constant improvement and development of the areas provides a wide variety of skills and experience to interested offenders. A high proportion of offender employment revolves around the farm, grounds and garden.

Some offenders who having obtained accredited training in other institutions find the new skill stops because of restricted availability of work and training courses. The committee would request the Irish Prison Service considers introducing further work & training facilities.

Chaplaincy

Lay Chaplain Catherine Black continues to provide spiritual guidance to the offenders. Catherine organises mass and other religious events and is always available to assist the offenders and staff when required.

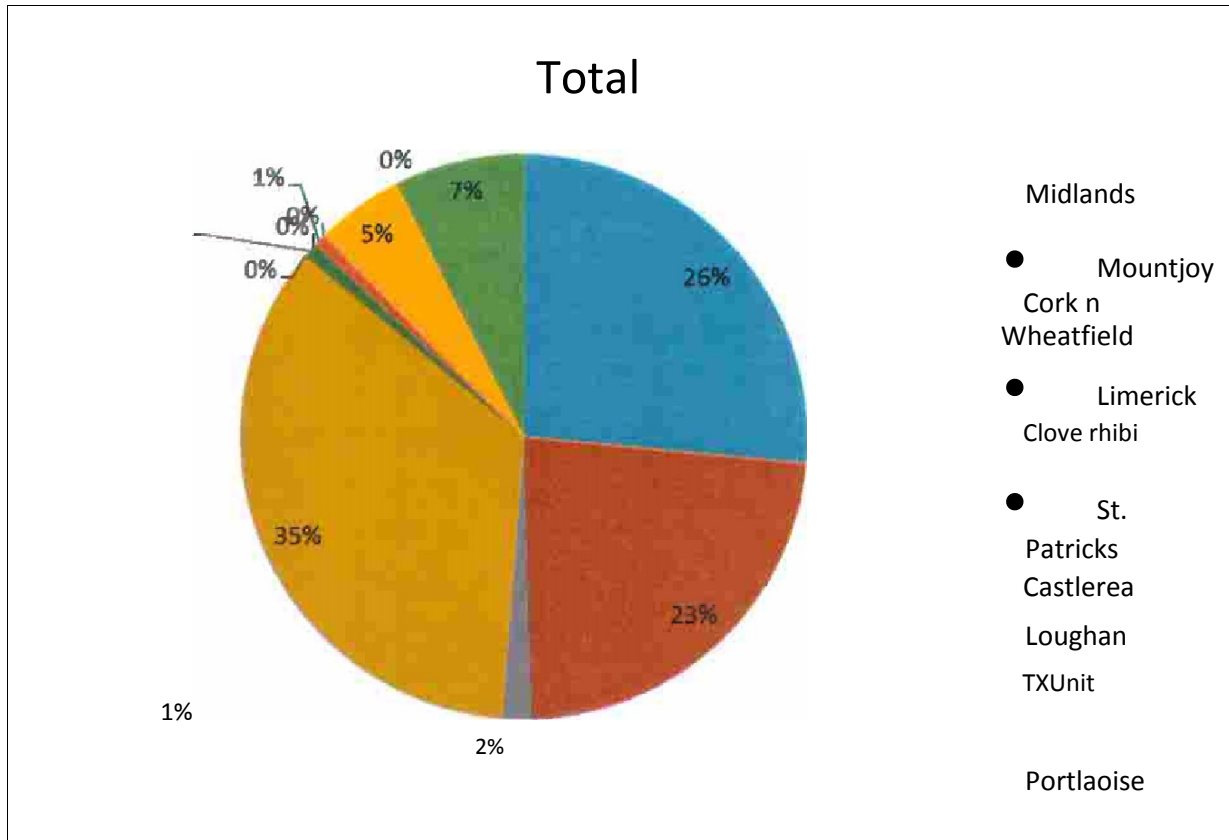
Accommodation

The Open Centre is separated into two accommodation units. The Main Building and Avoca House. The main Building accommodates 56 offenders in dormitory/communal rooms with one room now fitted out with Pods giving offenders a lot more privacy with long term offenders benefiting from this type of accommodation in preparation for moving into their own accommodation on release. Most offenders on transfer would be accommodated in the main building and over time progress to single room accommodation in Avoca House. The shared toilet and shower facilities (Main House) have now been refurbished to a very high standard.

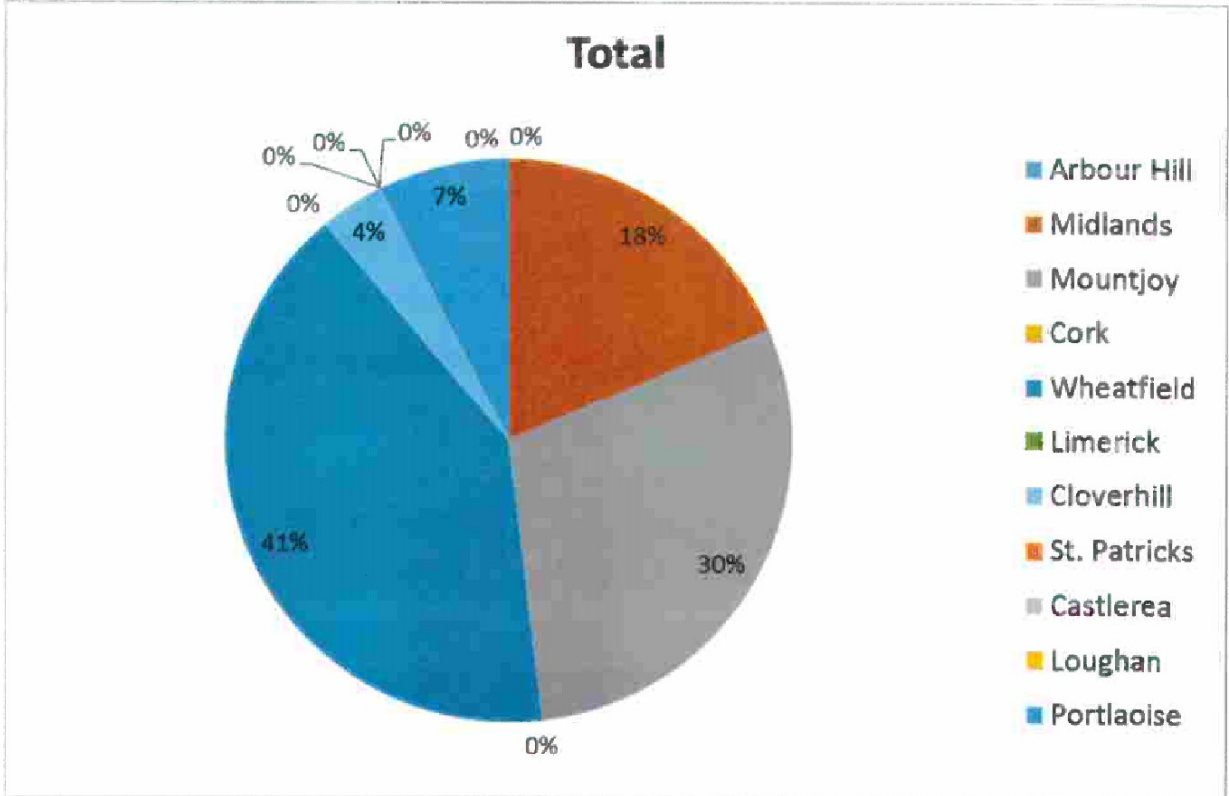
Avoca House also facilitates the Probation Service office, Chaplain, Addiction Counsellor, TEO and ISM Officer. Psychology service and Psychiatric service is provided on request. A visiting community welfare officer (morning once a week) provides a valued service to the offenders. Offenders being released with a small allowance ensures their families are not put under pressure to provide for them. The provision of temporary release programmes well in advance of an offenders release is proving to be an excellent reintegration tool. All offenders must supply an address where they are welcome during the periods of temporary release, The phased release plan allows time for relationships and trust to build. The alternative - immediate release back into the community is not as beneficial.

Offenders Statistics

121 offenders transferred In.

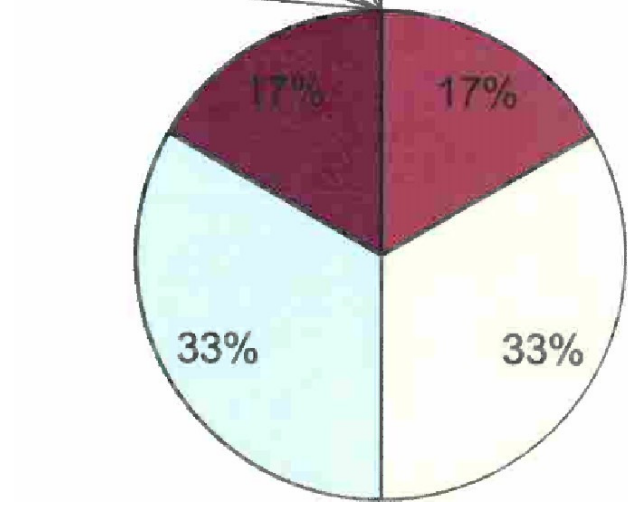


27 offenders transferred out



6 offenders absconded during the year with 3 still @ large at year end.

Absconders 2013



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Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
IRISH PRISON SERVICE

SHELTON ABBEY EDUCATION CENTRE

Annual Report 2017

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, valuable 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 educational backgrounds are catered for from Basic Ed. to Open University level. This presents challenges to accommodate a broad range 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 wholtime 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 timetabled 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.

Each week an average of 60 students attend the centre for various classes. Some attend numerous classes and others may attend for a small number of classes, depending on the level of interest of each individual.

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

Facilities

Currently the Education Centre operates in a prefab building which was originally installed as a temporary solution. This building is now in need of replacement with a permanent structure as structural problems are occurring. Restrictions on space also mean class sizes are not adequate to accommodate the demand for certain classes.

Local Accredited Programmes		
Title of programme;	Throughput in	Comments:
Adult Guidance & Counselling	241	Preparation for release Referrals for employment, training & further education
ESOL Programme	2	English classes for non- Irish students
Driver Support	56	RSA/NDLS accredited
ABE	15	Basic education (Literacy 1- 1 small groups)
General English	16	Education Course
Family Reading	18	
Sculpture in Wood	36	Skills Course
Art Workshops	19	Skills Course
General Art	24	Skills Course
Geography/Environmental Studies	4	Education Course
Cookery	14	Skills Course
History	10	Education Course
	67	Swimming, Hillwalking, Spinning, Gym, Nutrition, Pilates

QQI ENTRIES 2017

COMPONENT	REF	LEVEL	JUNE	DEC
Computer Aided Drafting	5N1604	5	7	2
Word Processing	5N1358	5	8	
Health & Fitness	3 N0531	3	4	
Word Processing	3 N0588	3	7	4
Working with Wood	3 N0589	3	10	4

Craft Mosaic	3 N1039	3	10	
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Internet access for inmates has been available in Shelton Abbey since 2014, with user accounts set up on an ongoing basis during 2017. 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 and also to research employment, education and training opportunities.

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 2017 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.

Hilwalking programme resumed for spring/summer term also coordinated by the Education Centre and the Gym officers.

Horticulture

Horticulture classes were delivered in cooperation with IPS staff. 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.

A trip to Colclough Walled Garden in Wexford took place in June and this was once again very interesting and informative. A group of 6 prisoners were taken for the day trip.

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.

Summer Activities/Projects

Physical Education and Exercise;

Weekly pilates classes were available.

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

Hillwalking groups were taken on day walks in the surrounding mountains, which proved to be very popular.

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.

Stone Carving Workshop;

Due to the success of the Arts Council Artists in Prison Scheme in 2015 and 2016 it was decided to run another project in 2017.

BREAKING ROCKS IN THE YARD

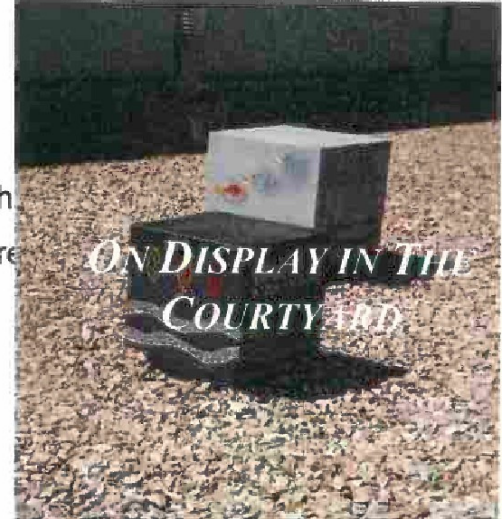
The Art class in Shelton Abbey embarked on a two week long stone sculpting project in May. The project was a partnership between the Arts Council and the Irish Prison Service and was facilitated through the Artist-In-Prison programme. A visit around the theme of the Avoca River & the famous song "The Meeting of the Waters" - helped facilitate the creation of an eye-catching installation fashioned after the waters. Six students were involved under the watchful eyes of the Art teacher Pearl & Aileen-Ann. The project was conceived and designed in the Art Room and moved to the Art Shed when the heavy work began.

The students used cubes of limestone to produce the art installation which has found a permanent home in the courtyard here at Shelton. Smaller stones slabs were used for individual practice & allowed each student create a unique piece of personalised Art which was retained after the project was completed.

Two limestone cubes with carving or lettering on their sides and top were designed and carved by the participants.

Some of the carvings were highlighted by painting or applying gold and silver leafing to the carved lettering.

All participants enjoyed the project immensely and were delighted to see their work on display.



students to mark their progress during the year. We had a former student returning to speak at the ceremony and he proved to very inspirational to all in attendance. Special thanks to Director of Further Education and Training with KWETB Caitriona Murphy for attending and presenting certificates on the day.

Health Care

Doctor's McCabe & Buggie provide the Medical cover, The Doctors parade continues Monday — Friday mornings and all medical requirements are facilitated through their office. Most offenders are considered suitable to have "En procession medication". The initiative allows suitable offenders (under contract) to retain medication and selfmedicate. There is no healthcare staff available during the hours of 8pm — Bam. There is no dedicated Psychologist or Psychiatrist assigned to the Centre. A review of the Psychology service did take place during the year which will see an improvement of the current service provision

Probation Service

The Probation Service continued to deliver a wonderful service to the offenders. The Community Return Scheme (CRS) has been one of the most positive/progressive initiatives witnessed by the committee. The Centre is one of the highest providers of candidates for CRS and this is in no part due to the dedicated work of the Probation team. The probation officers are still expected to deliver other services to offenders and are in constant demand.

Garden report 2017

Glasshouse

In 2017 shrubs from cuttings, bedding plants and vegetable plants were successfully propagated in the glasshouse. Selected cuttings from certain trees and shrubs were propagated throughout the winter. Vegetable plants such as cabbage, broccoli, lettuce were started in the glasshouse and then transferred to the farm and grown on.

Tomato plants were also started and transferred to the poly tunnel and grown on when the bedding plant season was over.

Composting

There was huge amounts of composting completed in 2017. All leaves and grass cuttings were gathered throughout 2017 and placed in the composting bays. These were then turned over every couple of weeks to assist the composting process. The negri shredders assisted with the composting process in 2017 especially cleaning up after storm Ophelia in October 2017. The compost was then graded and used in the flower beds and around the trees to enrich the soil structure for the flowers to be planted in the future. We have been approved to purchase a compost screening machine for 2018 we will greatly improve our composting process, where the compost will be screened and bagged which will all add to the work and training for the inmates that work in the garden area of Shelton Abbey.

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.

Footpaths

Certain footpaths throughout the garden that were in bad repair continued to be repaired throughout 2017. 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.

Rockery

An extensive upgrade was on going in the rockery area in 2017. This area had all the paths resurfaced and the stone replaced. The area was completely weeded and all old and obsolete shrubs were removed and replaced with new suitable shrubs. There has been new ecological features included such as butterfly boxes, bird boxes and spider hotels added also, which we are made by the inmates and now being looked after by them also.

New Garden Machinery

In 2017 we were very fortunate to be able to replace some garden machinery. We purchased 2 walk behind lawnmowers, 2 strimmer's and a leaf blowers. This will greatly assist us with the grass maintenance for the years ahead as well as keepi ng prisoners gainfully employed during the summer months. Our garden tractor was also replaced by a New Holland 25 HP tractor which has a very central role in the maintenance of the gardens and also in waste management here in Shelton Abbey.

Maintenance

As always the garden requires a huge amount of maintenance all year round. The garden requires a huge amount of grass cutting, strimming and spraying of footpaths throughout the summer. There was a huge amount of planting done also in the flower beds, fan beds, fountain, and rose garden and also maintenance around the reed bed, water towers and river access gate provided. Throughout the winter months it turns to leaf blowing and composting and drainage of footpaths. There was also a lot of trees in the garden planted which were to replace trees that have been destroyed by storm damage throughout the year. The inmates working on the garden were also involved in reseeding outside the new entrance walls and also sowed the new hedges. This greatly enhanced the entrance to Shelton Abbey,

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 was 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. The project was further expanded in 2017 with the introduction of fruit trees such as raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants. A hedging project is also hoped to be introduced also.

The small poly tunnel was fully used in training the inmates how to grow strawberries, lettuce, peppers etc,

The committee once again wish to convey their appreciation to Governor Kathy Hoctor and her staff for the professional and dedicated service provided to offenders during their stay in this Centre. There has been a remarkable improvement to this facility and we feel this should be developed further.

Other visiting committees have visited the Centre during the year and have noted and praised the work being done.

We feel single room accommodation best prepares offenders for release. The Centre lacks other facilities that might be considered in future capital investment plans i.e. Training workshops, Gym hall, Church, enhanced visitor's area.

There has been an addition of new work spaces in various areas to replace antiquated structures, these in time will add valued space to upskill prisoners and enable them to return to society better trained and rehabilitated to engage in a positive matter upon their eventual release. Various other works have been done including painting of interior, change of dining area and front hall.

May we take this opportunity to thank the Staff of Shelton Abbey, in-reach services, families, friends and offenders who we have found to be respectful and courteous during our visits. This Centre offers a positive environment and a progressive location to best prepare offenders to successfully reintegrate back into society.

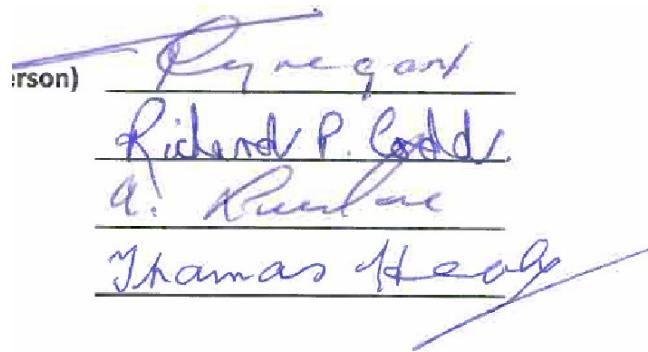
Signatures:-

Mr. Thomas Gregan
(Chairperson)

Mr. Richard Codd

Mr. Anthony Lawlor

Mr. Thomas Healy


Chairperson) Thomas Gregan
Richard P. Codd
Anthony Lawlor
Thomas Healy