

Loughan House

Visiting Committee

Annual Report 2009

(01.12.08 - 30.11.09)

We, the undersigned members of the Loughan House Visiting Committee, have pleasure in presenting this our Annual Report for 2009

The committee held a total of 12 meetings during the year all of which were well attended.

During the year Mr Clifford Kelly, Mr Eddie Feeley, Mrs Kathleen Richey, Mr Naul Mc Cole, Mr Brendan Hughes,

Mr Turlough Smith, Mr Pdraig O Biadha, Mr Charles Fleming, Mr Eamonn Kinch and Mr Thomas Reilly served on the Committee.

Mr Clifford Kelly served as Chairperson of the Visiting Committee and Mrs Kathleen Richey as Vice Chairperson.

We had a total of seven hundred and thirty two committals from other institutions during the year to the end of November 2009. The Temporary Release programme continues to work

well with most inmates returning to custody in compliance with their conditions of release.

Sixty inmates absconded from Loughan House during the year with most inmates being returned to custody shortly afterwards.

Mr M. Reilly served as Governor in Loughan House. Mr P. Kavanagh served as Assistant Governor.

Visits.

During the year the committee members visited the house on their unscheduled visits and found all inmates in a good and contented manner. The house and grounds were always in a neat and tidy condition and likewise the kitchen area that received excellent reports when audited, being in pristine condition on each of our inspections.

An annual visit was carried out to Limerick Prison during the year on the instruction of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Education

The education unit continues to offer an excellent range of subjects to the inmates from basic literacy skills to Fetac Courses and also provision of support on Open University Courses

. Such diverse subjects and topics as cookery skills, woodwork, computers, music and parenting skills are on offer. Inmates continue to attend this unit on an enthusiastic and totally voluntary basis.

Outdoor Pursuits and Educational Visits are also coordinated by the Education Unit during the Summer period in consultation with the Irish Prison Service who allocate Temporary Release for the trips.

In addition, inmates attend various courses outside Loughan House whenever the opportunity and demand arise. Such courses as ECDL, Computing, Sculpturing and Personal development are attended. Support for the delivery of certified courses is provided when required by Fas. In view of the increasing numbers of non nationals in custody the education centre now provides a ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course.

Addiction counsellor

Alan Higgings of the Merchants Quay Ireland project provides addiction counselling to the inmates in Loughan House. This counselling is designed to assist in drug, alcohol and gambling addiction and assists inmates in overcoming the addiction along with referral to outside agencies to assist them on their release from prison. The focus of the counselling is to help prevent any relapse into addiction and recommitment to prison.

Probation and Welfare Service.

The service has a full time Probation and Welfare Officer Mr Oliver Fallon. A good service is provided with inmates making good use of the service. A pre-release substance abuse programme is run in the institution by this service in conjunction with the Education unit and the Health Service Executive with inmates very willing to participate.

Other programmes run under this service include the Linkage Programme that was in part funded by the Department of Social and Family affairs providing a link between pre release inmates and the various training and employment services in the broader community. This program further attempts to address offender behaviour to prevent any reoccurrence and works towards resettlement and rehabilitation particularly with long term prisoners

Pre-release Programme

A formal pre-release programme is run in Loughan House by an Adult Guidance Teacher and this should greatly assist inmates when they are released as it covers all practical aspects of living and working in the community following release. The topics and skills learned include Safe Pass Certification, Forklift training, Driver Theory Tests, Personal Finance Management and Men's Health . Training under this initiative is delivered in Loughan House where practical and is enthusiastically attended by inmates who find it of great practical relevance and assistance in obtaining a job on their release. Again Fas offer great support in this programme whenever feasible

External Agencies

The needs of the inmates continue to be attended to by members of Alcoholics Anonymous when they have volunteers available. The Samaritans continue to promote their service within the institution through the provision of informative documentation and the help of the various bodies within the institution itself. Currently the Open Door Art project is ongoing and available to Inmates whereby they work throughout the Prison on the Prison - in - Support Art Project and also of avail of one to one Counselling.

Locally in consultation with Irish Prison Service Inmates are approved to work locally on a Gardening Project with Community Connections.

Services to outside agencies

Loughan House facilitates local schools in incorporating a visit to Loughan House in their CPSE course . These visits from the schools are seen as very worthwhile and have generated a better understanding of prisons and the prisoners detained therein.

Schools are very positive about the experience the visit provides to their students .

Health Care.

The provision of health care continues to be provided by a Nurse Officer who was appointed to Loughan House and now works with our two visiting doctors and dental surgeon to a very high standard. Psychiatric and Psychology services are provided whenever the need arises. There is a dentistry on site and this helps greatly with the provision of the dental services

Deaths in Custody

The death occurred of Inmate Martin Mc Donagh on 31st August 2009. This occasion was managed in a dignified and sensitive manner and the Committee would like to extend their sympathy to the family and friends of the late Mr Mc Donagh.

Kitchen

The kitchen area is regularly audited during the year to confirm the already high standard achieved in this area. Audits are carried out by the Food and Safety Authority and CERT with the Kitchen in Loughan House.

A wide and varied 28 Day Menu is provided on a daily basis to inmates with consideration for all nationalities and religious beliefs.

During the year an ongoing tutorial is offered to inmates who work in the kitchen area to complete a Primary Course in Food Hygiene. Staff, who work in the kitchen area, have successfully completed a Train the Trainer course to provide training to inmates working in the kitchen on best practices in catering skills. Three of the current complement of Kitchen Staff have also completed NVQ Level 2 in Food Preparation and Catering at Fermanagh (South West) College in their own time with assistance from Irish Prison Service.

Inmates Requests.

During the year no inmates requested to meet with the Committee. All inmates are given the opportunity to speak to the Committee with the provision of a Journal in the General Office.

Chaplaincy

The spiritual needs of the inmates are attended to by visiting chaplain Fr. John Mc Mahon from a local parish. Mass is celebrated on a weekly basis and on all the various feast days during the year.

The chaplain is available to attend to any inmate whenever called upon to do so and also visits weekly outside the Mass Times. The requirements of all inmates of whatever religious persuasions are attended to as required.

Maintenance & New Developments.

The members would like to thank the Governor and all the staff for the way they have maintained the buildings and grounds. The general environment of Loughan House was consistent with good residential care and would have greatly contributed to the comfort of its inmates.

The new building offering 60 rooms for accommodation purposes along with a number of communal areas is fully operational and working well. These new rooms offer single occupant accommodation in line with the policy of the Irish Prison Service.

Environmental Management System

Loughan House's Environmental Management System continues to develop with the objective of improving the local environment and raising awareness of environmental matters.

This project also wishes to operate with the objective of educating inmates on the need to be environmentally aware and train them for potential employment in this area.

The shortage of long term inmates and the building program in Loughan House have made it difficult for this area to achieve all its objectives but a good effort is being made under difficult circumstances .

Library

The library service continues to be provided by Cavan County Library. It is a valuable and well run service open three times a week under the care of a dedicated part time Librarian. Inmates make great use of this service.

Plans are in place to move the library to a more spacious environment as soon as possible that would be more centrally located thus affording the library greater prominence and accessibility.

In conclusion, we the Members of the Loughan House Visiting Committee would agree that Loughan House provided a good cost effective service to its residents and continues to review and upgrade the services it provides. We would like to complement the Governor and Staff for the commitment and dedication they give to the well being of the inmates in their care. Finally we would like to thank the Governor and all the Staff for the courtesy and co-operation extended to us on all our visits throughout the year.

Shannon Kelly Chairperson

Nanci McLoke Member

Kathleen Ruchey Vice Chairperson

Joseph J. Smith Member

Brendan Hughes Member

Patrick O'Brien Member

Thomas Reilly Member.

Charles J. O'Leary Member

Eddie Feely Member.

3/11/11 Member