

BARLINNIE PRISON VISITING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2015

CONTENTS

SECTION 1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

SECTION 2 HMP BARLINNIE

SECTION 3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 4 PRISON OPERATION

SECTION 5 THE WORK OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Section 1

STATUTORY ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE (V.C.)

The statutory responsibilities of V.C's and of their members are set out in Part 17 of The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions(Scotland) Rules 2006 made under Section8(2) of the Prisons(Scotland)Act 1989(c45).That states:"Rules made under section 39 of this Act shall prescribe the functions of visiting committees,and shall among other things require members to pay frequent visits to the prison and hear complaints which may be made by the prisoners and report to (Scottish Ministers) any matter which they consider it expedient to report; any member of a visiting committee may at any time enter the prison and shall have free access to every part thereof and to every prisoner"

A Visiting Committee is specifically charged to

- Co-operate with Scottish Ministers and the Governor in promoting the efficiency of the prison;
- Inquire into and report to Scottish Ministers upon any matter into which they may ask them to inquire;
- Immediately bring to the attention of the Governor any circumstances pertaining to the administration of the prison or the condition of a prisoner when they consider this necessary;if the Governor has not remedied matters within a reasonable period of time,they shall bring the matter to the notice of Scottish Ministers;
- From time to time,inquire into the state of the prison premises and inspect the food and drink provided to the prisoners and if at any time find these unsatisfactory,record any deficiencies in their minute book and send a copy to Scottish Ministers and the Governor;
- Hear and investigate any applications or complaints which prisoners may make to them and report their findings to the Governor and Scottish Ministers;
- Visit the prison fortnightly by not fewer than two of its members;
- At its discretion inspect prison records other than personal records,prisoners' records and security manuals or other papers which have implications for security and make a note of their inspection in their minutes;

Make an annual report for the period of 12 months ending on 31st March each year to Scottish Ministers about the state of the establishment and its administration and include any advice and suggestions they consider appropriate.

Section 2

HMP BARLINNIE

HMP Barlinnie is the largest prison in Scotland opened in 1882. It has a contract capacity of 1104 although in practice overcrowding means that this figure is exceeded.

It receives prisoners from West of Scotland courts serving sentences of less than 4 years. In July 2012, Letham Hall became a National Top End (NTE) facility providing accommodation for 50 Life or long term convicted prisoners nearing the end of their sentence. The purpose of the NTE is to monitor, assess and prepare individuals for progression to the Open Estate. In Barlinnie, prisoners are housed in 6 residential halls with one of these being exclusively for remand prisoners. All the cellular accommodation has internal sanitation.

Prisoners have access to industries, training and education on a daily basis..

The Social Work service is provided by Glasgow City Council and Education by Motherwell College. Industries, employment and training are all in house provision.

Other external agencies are involved in delivering various prisoner programmes.

Extensive modernisation works have been undertaken over the past few years.

Section 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This is the annual report of the Barlinnie Visiting Committee (VC) for the year ended 31st March 2015.

During the year the VC has met in the prison, carried out rota visits, responded to prisoner requests and visited all areas of the prison. Further details, statistics and comments are contained in the report.

I would like to thank the VC members for their contribution during the year. Despite the uncertainty about our future, members continued to make sure our statutory duty was carried out.

We noted that the average daily prisoner population was 1305 with the usual peaks and troughs and included prisoners relocated from HMP Grampian. This still represents an overcrowding situation and a challenge to management.

Despite this ongoing pressure the VC has observed that management continue to maximise out of cell activity at every opportunity. Increased recreational activities, work, training, education and a full range of programmes to address offending behaviour are available to prisoners. New showers in the gym area have been built and we saw the completion of the new education centre and communication hub. The positive work being done by the Family Contact Officers is especially welcome. The governor, senior management and staff remain proactive and implement policies aimed at prisoner welfare. All areas of the prison function well.

Governor Derek McGill left in July and the VC welcomed his replacement Ian Whitehead.

I would like to thank the governor and all his staff for the help given to the VC and for supporting our work, especially those staff members who give up their time to speak to us at our training talks. The governor's report is always circulated to members before the meeting and the governor attends to answer questions and join in any discussion.

This is the last full year report of the VC. We are to be abolished on 31st August and replaced by a new system of prison monitoring at local and national level.

During my 25 years as a VC member and latterly chair, I have seen a complete transformation of Barlinnie, which has led to major improvements in the way the prison population is managed. These include:

- Major construction to provide new visits area,staff accommodation, reception and gate
- The end of slopping out
- In cell TV
- A complete transformation in all aspects of catering
- Expansion of work,training,education and recreational opportunities
- Improved work and partnerships with an increasing number of external agencies and support groups.

I would like to thank all those with whom I have worked over the years and have contributed so much to the work of the VC in a voluntary capacity.Their level of commitment has been excellent.

I wish our successors well in continuing the essential work of prison monitoring.

Allan Devlin,

Chair,Barlinnie Visiting Committee

For further information contact the VC secretary

Gerard McElroy MBE gerardp.mcelroy@btopenworld.com

Section 4

PRISON OPERATION

During our visits we see all aspects of activity within the prison and would comment on the following.

2. Healthcare and Mental Health

The Healthcare centre is an extremely busy part of Barlinnie and there are always high demands made on all healthcare staff. The NHS is the health provider and appears to be operating well. The Health Service Manager spoke to the VC during the year and gave us a complete update on health service issues.

Mental health issues are important and there has been additional staff training to improve awareness and in D hall vulnerable prisoners have a personal officer.

3. Food

The size of the establishment and numbers involved present huge challenges for the catering department. All diets are catered for and in line with Scottish Prison service policy, healthy eating is the target.

Summer and winter menus are prepared and issued to the Halls. A very successful food focus group operates and there is always positive feedback. Catering staff help prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds to celebrate various festivals.

4. Equality and Diversity

The SPS is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. This is evident in the treatment and provision for prisoners at Barlinnie. Given the ever increasing numbers adherence to this policy is all the more important. Induction for new prisoners outlines the routine and regimes of the prison and information for ethnic minority prisoners is available as is a translation service.

5. Education/Training/Employment

Education, training and work opportunities are offered on a daily basis. It is clear that a large programme of activities is offered encompassing education training and employment. New ventures are being constantly sought out and this year metal fabrication in partnership with

Scottish Fire and Rescue contributed to the Commonwealth Games Legacy with the construction of structures depicting individual sports which will be situated at city Fire Station locations. The bicycle repair project continues to be popular and industries continue to teach SVQ's level 1&2. The Visioncall project in conjunction with Glasgow opticians is still ongoing.

The Garden Party and the poly tunnels are still a success and provide a constant supply of flowers to keep 'Barlinnie in Bloom'

The Education service provided by Motherwell College moved into a new unit and the Communications Hub was established along with Barlinnie Radio.

6. Residential Accommodation

Residential halls are still overcrowded however the VC has observed that out of cell time is maximised with work, training and recreation being readily available. Six new safer cells for prisoners at risk have been provided and heating upgrading has begun in C hall. There has been an issue during the year of increasing prisoner on prisoner assaults. Management is confident the new violence strategy will address this positively. The VC has noted cleaning standards remain high in the halls despite the high population.

7. Prison Estates and Management

The Estates Management unit worked in maintaining and upgrading internal and external facilities throughout the year and had a full programme of work. New showers were built in the gym area as well as new safer cells, education unit and heating upgrading in C hall begun.

8. Link Centre

The Link Centre still deals with a large amount of admissions on a daily basis and staff continue to manage the situation well and screen all the prisoners coming through and work very well with all the outside agencies which have an input. The VC has commented on the valuable contact with outside agencies which can make a difference especially on prisoner discharge.

9. Family Contact Centre

This is always a very productive part of the Barlinnie regime with many positive outcomes. The centre has provided a valuable range of family centred projects and programmes including children's visits and child and baby bonding sessions. There is a local visitor drop-in centre called The Croft organised by the local churches and based in a church hall down the road from the prison. Members of the group also offer advice in the visits waiting area.

10. Employment Services

Work continues with partner agencies and new employability programmes have been developed..The VC heard a presentation during the year from New Routes employment service.An Employment Fair was held in the prison in March for the local Criminal Justice Agency and local employers.

Section 5.

The Work of the V.C.

11. Statistics

Recommended complement of VC members	25
Number of members at start of year	23
Number of members at end of year	23
New members joining	0
Members leaving	0
Number of VC meetings during year	4
Average attendance at meetings	9
Total number of prisoner requests	39
Total number of VC rota visits to prison	91

The visiting committee has a membership of 25 drawn from eight local authorities nominating a mixture of councillors and lay members. Two Local Authorities have either still to nominate or complete their membership allocation. Current membership is as follows

Name	Nominating Authority
Councillor Ellen Freel	East Ayrshire Council
Rees Gallacher	North Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Matt Kerr	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Andy Carmichael	South Lanarkshire Council
Councillor George Black	West Dunbartonshire Council
Maria Corr	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Yvonne Kucuk	Glasgow City Council
Anne Desport	South Lanarkshire Council
Allan Devlin	North Lanarkshire Council
Jason Ditton	Glasgow City Council
Catherine Fallon	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Stuart Gallacher	South Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Terry Kelly	Renfrewshire Council
Anne Mills JP	Glasgow City Council
Gerard McElroy	North Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Jim Brown	West Dunbartonshire Council
Frances McGrade	Glasgow City Council
Baillie Hanif Raja	Glasgow City Council
Councillor Alan Graham	North Lanarkshire Council
Councillor Martha Wardrop	Glasgow City Council
Tom Swinney	North Ayrshire Council
Councillor Jim Montgomerie	North Ayrshire Council
Ann Wilkieson	Glasgow City Council

Meetings are held quarterly in the prison. The secretary prepares a rota which ensures two members are in the prison every fortnight. Generally we give notice of our visit so that an escort is provided if required and we are handed on from one part of the prison to another.

The following is a record of members' attendance

Name	Rota visits	Meetings	Comments
Rees Gallacher	8	2	
Matt Kerr	0	0	
Andy Carmichael	0	0	
George Black	4	2	
Maria Corr	0	0	
Yvonne Kucuk	0	0	
Anne Desport	1	0	
Allan Devlin	11	4	
Jason Ditton	4	3	
Catherine Fallon	1	0	
Stuart Gallacher	0	1	Appointed November 2013
Terry Kelly	2	3	
Anne Mills	4	4	
Ellen Freel	6	3	Appointed June 2013
Gerard McElroy	15	3	
Jim Brown	4	2	
Frances McGrade	2	0	
Hanif Raja	0	1	
Alan Graham	0	0	
Martha Wardrop	4	2	
Tom Swinney	21	4	
Jim Montgomerie	2	0	
Ann Wilkieson	2	1	

A system is in operation within the prison for prisoner requests to be dealt with by the VC. Permanent notices regarding the VC are on display in the Halls. Members interview prisoners, log the details of the request and refer to the appropriate prison management. The outcome is noted on the request form and the prisoner is notified.

The following is a summary of the requests received:

Category	2013/14	2014/15
Accommodation	1	0
Education/training/work	2	1
Estates issues/conditions	3	1
Family/visits	6	2
Food	3	0
Health	8	13
Transfers	6	16
Staff/prisoners issues	1	1
Housing	0	0
Sentence Issues	2	1
Canteen Prices	0	0
HDC Issues	1	2
Discipline	4	2

12. Association of Visiting Committees

This is our national association and the Chairman and Secretary attend the business meetings. All AVC communications are circulated to our committee members.

13.Training

The committee has a local training co-ordinator to assist with local and national training.Members attended the national conference and visits to other establishment arranged by the AVC.At our meetings we have a training input on some aspect of prison operation.SPS has agreed a national core training programme for members

Local Induction

Key Training

Personal Protection Training

Professional Boundaries

Act 2 Care

This is a record of members attendance at training events :

MEMBER'S NAME	SPS TRAINING DELIVERED LOCALLY			
	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)	Course Name (Tutor)
	'Moving forward,making changes' Louise Riddoch Barlinnie	New Routes Partnership Steve DochertyHMP Barlinnie Charlie Martin New Routes	Prisoner Visits Mick Neill HMP Barlinnie	Barlinnie Health Service Frank Gribben Health Service Manager
Andy Carmichael				
Rees Gallacher		X	X	
George Black			X	X
Allan Devlin	X	X	X	X
Jason Ditton	X	X		X
Maria Corr				
Hanif Raja			X	
Gerard McElroy		X	X	X
Jim Brown		X	X	
Tom Swinney	X	X	X	X
Anne Mills	X	X	X	X
Terry Kelly	X	X	X	
Martha Wardrop	X			X
Ann Wilkieson				X
Frances McGrade				
Cathy Fallon Ellen Freel Stuart Gallacher	X X		X	X

It is anticipated that there will be new training requirements for members recruited to serve in the new system and the secretary has alerted the training officer in Barlinnie

We would like to thank Barlinnie staff for their input and assistance at local training events.