

Inverness Prison Visiting Committee

Annual Report 2011/2012



HMP Inverness

**Margaret Paterson
Chairman**

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Foreword by Margaret Paterson, Chairman

This year there have been challenges to face but the good work of the Inverness Prison Visiting Committee has continued throughout regardless.

There have been no changes to the membership of our Visiting Committee this year but this may change after the Council Elections on 3 May this year.

Finally, I would like to once again formally record my thanks to my Vice Chairman and our fellow members on the Visiting Committee for all their help and support over the last year, particularly in light of the news from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP, regarding the proposed abolishment of the Visiting Committees in Scotland. The members of the Inverness Prison Visiting Committee have continued to go about their duties as usual and I thank them for that.

Mrs Margaret Paterson
Chairman, Inverness Prison Visiting Committee

The History of HMP Inverness

Inverness Prison, known locally as Porterfield, serves the Courts of the Highlands, Western Isles, Orkney Isles and Moray, providing secure custody for all remand prisoners and short term adult prisoners, both male and female (segregated). It also holds a small number of long-term prisoners, prior to classification, on accumulated visits, or to support the operational needs of the SPS.

The present prison was opened in 1902, having relocated from nearby Inverness Castle to what was, at that time, the rural parish of Porterfield. There were 25 male and 10 female prisoners in accommodation comprising of 49 cells. Throughout its subsequent history the prison has had a mixed population of men and women, convicted and untried prisoners. Today, however, the numbers are significantly higher, averaging around 150, and the cellular capacity has risen to 104.

The accommodation halls within the confines of the original wall have changed internally over the past 100 years, although their facades have remained the same. A number of extensions and extra buildings have been incrementally added to cope with rising and changing demands. Examples include the new Gate complex, the workshops and laundry. Other areas, such as facilities for healthcare and catering have been modernised.

The original cells were barely furnished. Now they have in-cell sanitation, bunk-beds, fitments, electric power and TVs - reflecting modern standards of living.

Prison labour was used to build the establishment. Subsequent employment included oakum-picking, sack sewing and mat-making, as well as maintenance of the prison estate and further building work. Physical drills and Bible classes punctuated the week. There is no mention in the records of 1903 of learning centres nor fitness centres such as those provided today. Programmes to address offending behaviour did not feature either, although perhaps the Chaplain (who "states that he spends upwards of 2 hours weekly in the prison") and Mrs Werner, the "Lady Visitor" took such a role upon themselves.

The working environment for staff has also changed. The first Governor, John Nicol, had a house built for himself within the walls. Two houses were additionally erected for "married warders" and "female warders" had quarters provided too - supplied with drainage, gas, water and service pipes. Prison Officers now work an average of 37 hours a week and the concept of tied housing has been abandoned since the 1980s. Their job has evolved away from that of turnkey to actively engaging with prisoners in pursuit of the Scottish Prison Service model of correctional excellence.

Statutory Role of the Visiting Committee

The statutory responsibilities of Visiting Committees and of their members are set out in Part 17 of The Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2006 made under Section 8(2) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 (c.45). That states: "Rules made under section 39 of this Act shall prescribe the functions of visiting committees, and shall among other things require the members to pay frequent visits to the prison and hear any 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 they 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 31 March each year to Scottish Ministers about the state of the establishment and its administration and include any advice and suggestions they consider appropriate;

Inverness Prison Visiting Committee Membership

- Margaret Paterson – Chair*
- Jackson Hiddleston – Vice-Chair
- Christina Cameron
- Janet Campbell *
- John Ford *
- Laurie Fraser *
- Paul Laidlaw
- Donnie Mackay *
- Jean Urquhart *
- Ian Williams

* Denotes Local Authority Councillor

The Work of the Visiting Committee

Visiting Committee Statistics	2011/12
Recommended complement of VC members (per Rule 155)	10
Number of VC members at start of the reporting period	10
Number of VC members at end of the reporting period	10
Number of new VC members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of VC members leaving within the reporting period	0
Total number of VC committee meetings during reporting period	3
Average number of attendances at Board meetings during reporting period	7/10
Total number of applications/complaints received	7
Total number of visits to the prison*	51

Nature of Applications/Complaints Received

There were no formal complaints during 2011 which were dealt with accordingly, there have been no formal Complaints/Applications received during 2012, an indication that Inverness Prison is extremely well run. Members of the Committee on Rota Visits, through contact with Prisoners have informally picked up a wide range of issues which have received further enquiries such as visits, segregation, suicide watch, milk allowance etc. This is an indication that Inverness Prison Visiting Committee Members take an active interest in contact with Prisoners.

Training

In terms of training provided by the Prison in which Members of the Prison Visiting Committee have been invited to participate, on 10 June 2011, a training session was given on Psychological Manipulation provided by the Training Officer at Porterfield Prison.

This was followed by a training session on the Prison Listener Scheme on 16 September, 2011 presented by one of the Prison Officers at Porterfield Prison and a briefing session on Support Networks presented by the Social Worker, Criminal Justice at Porterfield Prison on 14 December, 2011.

During the course of the year, our Training Officer co-ordinated all the training provided at HMP Inverness during the course of the year with the staff there and provided members of the committee with information on Self Defence-Hostage Awareness training and general information on other available courses.

Further training courses were planned for implementation during the coming year.

Chairman's Annual Report

Healthcare, Mental Health, Education, Training and Work

New targets had been issued for 2011/12, and Alcohol and Drug Action for Change targets remained the same (32 & 12 respectively). Smart course had been replaced by Substance Related Offending Behaviour Programme (SROBP). The target of 24 completions for the year had been set but delivery would depend on staff being fully trained and access to Psychology services. Agreement has been reached with SPS HQ that Inverness would deliver 16 Smart Recovery and 8 SROBP as the Psychologist was not yet in post.

During the winter although agreement had been reached with SPS HQ to deliver 16 Smart and 8 SROBP, this would now read nil SROBP and the 8 completions to replace SROBP would be made up from the other programmes currently on offer. The total certificate target would be delivered over this reporting year. The prison had 100% completed in terms of Integrated Case Management and Addiction misuse assessments and action.

Targets for work based certification targets were well down on last year, however around 40 manual handling certificates each month for the next 5 months were delivered. The BICS party was re-opened which would deliver work based certification.

During the earlier part of 2012 targets for delivery of Approved Activities had all been met with one month of year to go. BICS work Party restarted from 1st January 2012 to improve standards of cleanliness and deliver Certification and Training to Prisoners.

Residential Accommodation

In terms of residential, the average population figures for the year to date were 142 with the lowest at 132 and the highest population at 157.

Numbers in the Community Integration Unit remained low which was partly due to the move of females from Cornton Vale to Edinburgh. However, the prison staff were working closely with Cornton Vale and Edinburgh to achieve an early resolution to this issue.

Prison Estate and Administration

During the year the following work had been undertaken at the prison by the Estates team in the period:

- Refurbishment of A Hall Dorm
- Resurfacing of Old Edinburgh Road car Park area
- Redecoration of kitchen and new lighting was on-going
- Front of house project /Security Entry was 50%complete.

- New heating system for stores areas, bag and tag, C and R Training room, store and garage were completed on 1st December.
- New distribution board fitted in surgery area.
- New emergency lights admin attic.
- Enabling works for NHS/SPIN I.T network connection.
- Installation of front of house Security entry system
- Installation of new in-cell TV's in all cells
- Installation of Central Heating system in Prisoner Canteen/Control and Restraint Store area
- Replacement of catering equipment in Kitchen

During the year the following had also been undertaken at the prison:

Security Procedures

In the drive to standardise procedures across the SPS there had been some recent changes in regards to access and egress to the prison such as making it compulsory to show ID cards on entry to the prison. If someone forgot their ID card then their name would be recorded and they would have to show it the next time on entry to the prison. Also all laptop computers would have to be encrypted before they would be allowed within the prison.

There would be further changes to searching, what could be taken across the secure side of the perimeter etc. and these changes would be implemented in due course local protocols and agreements were developed.

Front of House

Support had been gained in the prison's submission to gain funding to alter the pedestrian traffic flow into the establishment to make the process more secure and more compliant with the standardisation agenda.

There had been some inevitable disruption to prison business in the short term whilst the changes were made but in the long term the results made the prison more compliant with the SPS security standards, better replicated the access/egress experience in other establishments and provided better front of house communications.