

# H.M.P. KILMARNOCK VISITING COMMITTEE



## Annual Report

1st April 2013 - 31st March 2014

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE OF HMP  
BOWHOUSE, KILMARNOCK**

**1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014**

**This is the 13th Annual Report of the Visiting Committee of HMP Kilmarnock**

**1. THE COMMITTEE**

**East Ayrshire**

Jim Currie (Chair)  
Jim Mills  
William Garven  
Cllr Ellen Freel

**South Ayrshire**

Cllr Peter Convery  
Cllr Philip Saxton  
Jean Wilson (Co-Vice Chair)

**North Ayrshire**

Nan Wallace (Co-Vice Chair)  
Jim Montgomerie  
John Eastdale

**East Renfrewshire**

Cllr Alistair Carmichael  
Sylvia Black

**South Lanarkshire**

Cllr Maureen Devlin

1.1 No official decision has been taken about the future of the Visiting Committees as yet but it is expected to be made sometime in 2015. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 the Visiting Committee was short of 2 members.

## **2. MEETINGS AND VISITS**

2.1 Meetings were held in May 2013, August 2013, October 2013, December 2013, January 2014 and April 2014.

2.2 At all Quarterly meetings a full report was given by the Bowhouse Director, Sandy McEwan, and a full update given of any changes to staff personnel which had been made during the course of the previous quarter. The average attendance at the meetings was 12 - a slight increase from the previous year.

2.3 The Annual Burns Supper again took place in Bowhouse on the 30<sup>th</sup> January assisted by a Burns Club from Ayrshire with the participation of the prisoners. This was very well received and thoroughly enjoyable. In 2015 the Mauchline Burns club will be involved in the Burns Supper.

2.4 The rota visits which took place on a fortnightly basis were all successfully covered. As was initiated last year, follow-up complaints had to be made by those who had received the initial complaint. This has proved a success and any problems with regards to the inaction of any complaints was reported to the Director.

## **ISSUES AND INCIDENTS**

3.1 Learning the building trade as was reported in last year's report has been highly successful and appears to be accepted by the prisoners.

3.2 As per last year the Learning Scheme is proving very popular. The main tutor and his staff are very efficient and the tutors are keen for their clients to progress for further qualifications which may help them in the outside world.

3.3 It is noted that there is a lack of worthwhile projects which could be beneficial when eventually the prisoners go back into the real world. The building work experience though is being well received. Since the last Annual Report two new contracts have been established, one specialising in dog products, chews etc and is situated within Shed 3 where the goods are manufactured, sorted into the correct size, then labelled and packed. The other contract is from a Sail Company based in Largs. The prison manufactured some samples of various sizes and the first order was placed in March for 150 sail bags. The Education Department is worthy of mention as it has a very enterprising staff and appears to be well appreciated by all those attending.

3.4 The chairman now keeps a record of all training undertaken by the Visiting Committee. This includes all visits to other establishments. Any local training undertaken will be recorded at each quarterly meeting.

- 3.5 The future of the Visiting Committees, as has already been mentioned in the report, is still in 'limbo' but it is doubtful that any decision will be made before April 2015
- 3.6 There is much concern within the Visiting Committee about the lack of knowledge as to the purpose of Visiting Committees and the almost total lack of forms to explain the aims of the committee within Bowhouse itself.
- 3.7 The Health Care facilities, which were changed over to the NHS last year, seem to be working well with an increase in surgeries during the year although there is still concern from the inmates about the delays in obtaining a Dentist.
- 3.8 During the visits all areas of the prison were visited including the Medical Centre and Kitchen. No abnormalities or complaints were made. It was encouraging to note efforts were being made to obtain more private work for the prisoners but there is still a long way to go.

### CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Committee would like to record their thanks to the Director and all the prison staff for co-operating totally with the various complaints made and the time and effort they gave to the Visiting Committee throughout the year.
- 4.2 The quarterly report on Bowhouse Prison was given at each Visiting Committee meeting by the Director, Sandy McEwan.
- 4.3 On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 there were 500 prisoners and on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 there were also 500 prisoners, exactly the same as the previous year
- 4.4 With regards to staffing levels in Bowhouse: on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 there was a 7.83% decrease in staff. The number of working days lost during the year was a total of 2737.14, which works out at an average of 9.32%

**In the reporting period there were a number of incidents as listed below**

Reportable Incidents	1159
Staff Serious Assault	1
Prisoners Serious Assault	5
Smuggled in Items	15
Breaches of Security	15
Use of Restraint	151 (43 full restraint & 108 compliant removals)

- 4.5 There are Quarterly Meetings a year and at each meeting we have a written prison report. The Director always attends to answer any relevant questions with regards to the prison.
- 4.6 There are two members of the Visiting Committee in the prison every fortnight on a rota basis

- 4.7. Every fortnight the Prisoners Complaints Book is made available to the Visitors and the appropriate inmate interviewed. If the complaint is not satisfactorily settled that day the same members of the VC have to return until they are satisfied that the complaint has been properly investigated. There are on average at least two complaints per visit but mostly it has been found that rather than a written complaint a prisoner will approach a member of the VC to verbally register their problem.
- 4.8 Three other prisons were visited by the committee during the past year.
- 4.9 Any new member of the VC has to attend an Induction Course.
- 5.00 There are twelve members at present with 2 vacancies.