

HMP Kilmarnock
Visiting Committee



Annual Report to 31 March 2012

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE OF HMP BOWHOUSE, KILMARNOCK

1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012

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

1. THE COMMITTEE

East Ayrshire

Jim Currie (Chair)
Cllr John MacKay
Jim Mills
William Garven

South Ayrshire

Cllr Elaine Little
Cllr Peter Convery
Eila MacLennan
Jean Wilson (Co-Vice Chair)

North Ayrshire

Cllr Margie Currie
Nan Wallace (Co-Vice Chair)
2 Vacancies

East Renfrewshire

Cllr Alistair Carmichael
Sylvia Black

South Lanarkshire

Cllr James Malloy

- 1.1 During the year past 12 months Les Anderson announced her resignation from the committee. It was agreed that due to the uncertainty of Visiting Committees that the vacancies (2) at present would not be filled. Also in May, Eillen Wyllie became the Clerk to the Visiting Committee and Gillian Kuhn who had been the Clerk since the opening of Bowhouse was thanked for all the hard work that she had done over the years. The Councils within Bowhouse remit had all agreed that the Clerk to the V.C.'s would be done in a rota format.

2. MEETINGS AND VISITS

- 2.1 Quarterly meetings were held in May 2011, August 2011, November 2011 and February 2012. At our May meeting the Lead Chaplain in Bowhouse, Colin Cuthbert, gave a presentation on his current role within the prison. Subsequently members of the VC attended one of the Chaplaincy meetings and it was agreed that both parties should work together for the benefit of Bowhouse.
- 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.
- 2.3 In November the Visiting Committee held a social lunch in Park Hotel, Kilmarnock. Hopefully this will become an annual event.
- 2.4 The average attendance at the meetings was 12 - a slight increase from the previous year.
- 2.5 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 complain. 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 All members of the Visiting Committee have now attended a Prisoners Induction Course
- 3.2 The chairman, along with a number of members of the Visiting Committee, attended the Bowhouse Art and I.T. Exhibition which was highly successful and extremely informative. It showed the ability of many of the inmates of Bowhouse.
- 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 is still in 'limbo' but hopefully a positive decision will be made early in 2013. At the February meeting of the V.C.'s Mr Adam Ingram MSP was present. He was highly supportive of the retention of the V.C's and stated that many of the MSP's of all parties wanted to retain the V.C's
- 3.6 During the year there were no serious incidents other than smuggling of items into the prison and a number of breaches of security which included the use of mobile phones.
- 3.9 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.

4. 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. The main difference in 2011 was the change-over of the Medical Facility to the NHS . It is too early to judge as to whether there has been an improvement in the service.
- 4.3 On 31st March 2011 there were 595 prisoners and on 31st March 2012 there were 644 prisoners, an increase of 59.
- 4.4 With regards to staffing levels in Bowhouse, on the 31st March 2012 there was a 7.6% decrease in staff . Staff sickness over the period was 3.85% days of working days which was 10.24 of days lost per head.

In the reporting period there were a number of Incidents

Reportable Incidents	1839
Staff Serious Assault	0
Prisoners Serious Assault	6
Smuggled in Items	31
Breaches of Security	15
Use of Restraint	250

- 4.5 There are Quarterly Meetings a year and at each meeting we have a written prison report. The Governor 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 V.C. 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 V.C. 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 V.C. has to attend an Induction Course.
- 5.00 There are thirteen members at present with 2 vacancies.