

**CAMPBELTOWN**

**LEGALISED POLICE  
CELL**

**VISITING COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2013/2014**

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### CAMPBETOWN LEGALISED POLICE CELLS VISITING COMMITTEE

**FOREWORD** Legalised Police Cells (LPC's), which are unique to certain parts of Scotland, derive historically from the inaccessibility of the Scottish Courts in outlying districts and islands. These police cells have been "legalised" and as such are used to hold prisoners awaiting trial locally, or who have been returned from prison for sentencing or following conviction, pending transfer to prison. Prisoners held in the LPC's are detained under the provisions of the Prison and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2011

Since the introduction of the private prisoner Escort Service, currently undertaken by G4S these cells are not being used.

With all these difficulties in mind The Committee continued to express the suggestion that Video Link trials could perhaps be tried in order to reduce the long journeys which prisoners have to make. They do however appreciate that there could be other issues if these were to be introduced, for example, prisoners released having to find their own way home after a long day in Court.

The Committee are not aware of any occasions when prisoner transport has been caught up in these delays but the vehicles have had to make long detours when the road has been closed due to landslips. Because of these travel difficulties which are a fairly regular occurrence, members are ever conscious of the fact that the situation could arise when prisoners could be late for Court because of these travel problems

The Legalised Police Cells, like prisons, are the responsibility of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and as such are subject to triennial inspections. Mr. Mick Armstrong, Inspector, HMCIP last inspected the cells on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 when he recommended that the Legalised Police Cells at Campbeltown be closed. The cells are due to be inspected once again by the HMCIP in 2014 but a telephone call to

his office has confirmed that no visit is schedule for 2014.

**MEMBERSHIP** Campbeltown Legalised Police Cell's visiting Committee constituted under Rule 155 of the Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Rules 2011 and in terms of Schedule 3 of these Rules the Committee comprises of three members all of whom are non-elected and appointed by Argyll and Bute Council.

During the year a vacancy arose on the Committee due to the resignation of Mr. Geoff Page, on ill health grounds. Towards the end of the year an application was made to Argyll & Bute Council to appoint Mrs. Isabella Soudan to the Committee membership in addition to her role as Clerk and it is expected that this will be approved in the near future. Otherwise the membership has remained unchanged throughout the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 with Mr John Milligan continuing to serve as Chair and Representative on the Association of Prison Visiting Committees and Mrs. Gardiner as Vice Chair. Mrs. Isabella Soudan continues to serve as Clerk.

Following on from the change from Strathclyde Police to Police Scotland the policing structure within the Station has been changed but the Committee continue to be well received and courteously treated at all times.

**MEEETINGS** During the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the Committee met at Campbeltown Police Station on one occasion, 20 February 2014. When only Mr. Milligan attended.

The lack of finance, business and the general uncertainty over the future of the Committee as resulted in a reduction in the number of meetings held during the year.

## CELLS

It is declared under The Campbeltown Legalised Police Cells (declaration and Revocation) Rules 2009 that cells named “Female 1” and “Male 1” shall be the legal prisons for the detention of prisoners. These Rules came into force on 26 November 2009

During the year 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the cells were inspected on 9 occasions, eight by John Milligan, and once by Joyce Gardiner. Due to the committee vacancy Mr. Milligan took on additional inspections.

Each cell is equipped with a concrete plinth, an unscreened WC and hand washing facilities. Modern buzzers and alert buttons are in place. Toilets cannot be flushed from within the cell and prisoners, when required, use a buzzer system to request that the toilet be flushed.

Throughout the duration of a female prisoner’s detention, either a Female Police Officer or female civilian worker is on duty. A female officer is also on duty if a prisoner is held in the Observation Cell.

While these facilities might not be ideal for the Committed or Remand Prisoner we must bear in mind that these cells are mainly used for custody prisoner’s detention whose needs are different.

Generally the cells were found to be clean and tidy, but on several visits it was noted that there were problems with the water supply to the male cells. This now appears to be rectified.

Any prisoner identified as being at risk is held on 15-minute surveillance checks with high-risk prisoners being detained in the observation cell under constant supervision with two members of staff in attendance for the duration of the prisoner’s time in custody. G4S is informed at the time of pick-up from the Police Cells of any high-risk prisoners and where appropriate of any other special needs.

**LEGALISED PRISONERS**

During the year from 1 April 2013 until 31 March 2014 there were no committed prisoners in the cells.

The private prisoner escort service is provided by G4S who transport the prisoners to and from prison direct to court, without coming into Campbeltown Police Station.

The lack of contact with prisoners travelling in these vehicles continues to be a source of concern for the Committee Members.

It is felt that the Legalised Police Cells were established to cover a unique situation, namely the distance from prison to Court but now this fundamental fact appears to be totally disregarded together with the fact that the Government proposes to discontinue Campbeltown Legalised Police Cells Visiting Committee without a replacement body being in position is also a worry for the members. While over the years there have been no incidents reported or concerns raised by prisoners it is not to say that it will always be this way.

**MEDICAL PROVISIONS**

In event of a prisoner requiring a medical examination or medical attention a local General Practitioner is called or the prisoner is taken to the local hospital which is within close proximity of the Police Station. The hospital is also covered by the Air Ambulance Service which can be used if the prisoner cannot be treated at the hospital.

Several police officers and civilian staff are trained in First Aid, some having taken their qualifications to a higher level.

**MEALS PROVISION**

If a committed or remand prisoner were held and required to be fed The Station hold a supply of microwavable meals and staff are trained in food handling. But the committee are aware of occasions when prisoners have left the prison without having been fed or given a packed meal.

**PRISONER  
TRANSPORT**

Since the prisoner's transport was privatised in the autumn of 2004, a service which appears to be working well for the police and the Prison Service but has a serious downside for the prisoners and the LPC Visiting Committee as due to the lack of contact with prisoners and the fact the prisoners do not appear to have any independent Body to whom they could address a complaint, a provision which was readily available to them while in the Legalised Cells.

The lack of prisoner contact has been raised in HMCIP reports in the past.

The Committee have suggested that perhaps Video Link trials could be tried in order to reduce the long journeys which prisoners have to make to attend Court.

**TRANSLATORS  
AND ETHNIC  
REQUIREMENTS**

Police Scotland has access to translators if required and hold a stock of prayer mats, compasses, washbasins and a copy of the Koran but to date none of these have ever been used.

**EXERCISE  
FACILITIES**

The Station has an excellent exercise yard part of which is covered and provides protection in inclement weather.

**LAUNDRY  
FACILITIES**

Police Scotland, provide mattresses, bedding, towels, etc. and if required nightwear. The local laundrette deliver and collect laundry as necessary and this works well.

**CLOTHING**

The local Red Cross assist with clothing if necessary and a supply of Prison suits are held in the Police Station.

**READING  
MATERIALS**

A large selection of reading materials is available for use by the prisoners and newspapers are provided if requested.

- FIRE ALARMS**            The alarms are tested on a weekly basis and mock evacuations are carried out, and the Local Strathclyde Fire Brigade attends.
- COMPLAINTS  
AND  
GRIEVANCE**            Complaint and Grievance forms are held in the Police Station but these have never been used.
- SUMMARY**                The Visiting Committee members express grateful thanks to all staff at Campbeltown Police Station for their help, assistance and co-operation during the year.

*Jack Milligan* Chair

....30 June 2014    Date