



PERTH PRISON VISITING COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

1 APRIL 2010 – 31 MARCH 2011

This Report was compiled by the membership of the Perth Visiting Committee 2011.

For further information contact the Secretary to the VC at Perth & Kinross Council

Yvonne Oliver YOliver@pkc.gov.uk or Scott Hendry SBHendry@pkc.gov.uk

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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 2011. Section 8(2) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 (c.45) 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".

Some of the rules governing visiting committees are of a largely procedural nature relating to appointments, meetings, etc. but others spell out responsibilities which are central to the role of visiting committees, i.e.:

- they shall co-operate with Scottish Ministers and the Governor in promoting the efficiency of the prison;
- they shall inquire into and report to Scottish Ministers upon any matter into which they may ask them to inquire;
- they shall 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;
- they shall, 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 they shall record any deficiencies in their minute book and send a copy to Scottish Ministers and the Governor;
- they shall hear and investigate any applications or complaints which prisoners may make to them and shall report their findings to the Governor and Scottish Ministers;
- not fewer than two members of a Visiting Committee shall visit the prison fortnightly;
- they may inspect prison records other than personal records; prisoners' records and security manuals or other papers which have implications for security and a note of their inspection shall be made in their minutes;
- they shall make annual reports 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 may include any advice and suggestions they consider appropriate;

Description of the Prison

1. Perth Prison has three Residential Halls and has a design capacity of 632. In extremis, the Establishment's Assessed Operational Limit (AOL) is 801. The latter was exceeded on several occasions during 2011, although still over numbers this has declined from last year. The Prison accommodates all sentence lengths and security categories from low to high supervision and includes both remand and convicted adults. All Halls accommodate prisoners in both single and double cells.
2. A Segregation Unit of 14 single cells is located away from the main Halls and accommodates those prisoners whom it is either not safe or appropriate to locate within the mainstream. This may be as a result of violent behaviour or serious breaches of Prison Rules.
3. Exercise facilities for the adults are provided in the gymnasium which has a sports hall and cardiovascular room, an all weather 5 a side football pitch and outside exercise areas. The Residential Halls provide facilities for playing snooker and table tennis. Dining tables in the communal areas can also be used during recreation areas for playing board games.
4. Food is prepared in the central kitchen which is located separately from the main Halls in a purpose built facility located in the Regimes building. The food is transported to the Halls in heated containers and then transferred to purpose built pantries from which it is then served to the prisoners.
5. A fully equipped laundry is located next to the kitchen and provides all laundry facilities for the entire prison.
6. A Health Centre located close to the Halls provides primary care facilities as well as mental health, addictions, dental care and specialist clinics to treat blood borne viruses, asthma and other specific health problems. .
7. A multi faith Centre is located off B Hall and provides Chaplaincy services for all faiths, a planned rebuild and relocation is now underway. Services of worship, meetings and classes take place in the Centre though the Chaplains also undertake their pastoral duties throughout the prison.
8. A comprehensive programme of education is delivered within the Regimes building and is provided by Carnegie College. A library service is provided within this programme which is administered by Perth & Kinross Council.
9. The Regimes building is also the location for the delivery of work opportunities for prisoners including wood machining and the manufacture of timber products, catering, laundry, packaging and textile manufacture. There are also vocational training workshops in the form of bricklaying, plumbing, hairdressing, industrial cleaning and painting and decorating.
10. A Visitors' Centre for prisoners' relatives and friends now located within the prison in the new entrance to the prison. It is funded by the Robertson Trust and is managed by Crossreach with support from the Prison's Chaplaincy team and Family Contact Development Officers.

11. Huge investment has been made in redeveloping the prison to provide integral sanitation for all prisoners, to upgrade physical security and to ensure that the prison's facilities are fit for purpose in the 21st century. This has resulted in demolition of many parts of the old prison to provide a modern new hall which accommodates 363 prisoners, a Healthcare Centre, Regimes building, gymnasium, prisoners' reception area and refurbishment of existing prisoner accommodation.

The redevelopment programme is certainly on course to be completed in 2010 with the completion over the last few months of the new Gate and Visits facility, estates and stores building and other internal security upgrading. Whilst there is still extensive demolition and rebuilding work underway the end to the programme is now within sight. Refurbishment work on the A, B and C halls has been underway with facilities being upgraded with prisoner cells that should meet their needs.

These new facilities now ensure that that the prison is in the best possible position to provide a full range of opportunities to enable prisoners to address their offending behaviour and to prepare for release within a secure, structured and purposeful setting.

Executive Summary

The year has been dominated by major changes within the Visiting Committee and prison management

1. Chris Hind remained Chairperson
2. The appointment of Bobby Mangto as vice chair following the resignation of Gordon Samson who no longer wished the role.
3. The continuation of Stuart Brown as Training officer who has become very active in establishing Induction training for all new members
4. The resignations of 2 members. The committee is currently running with 4 vacancies.
5. The change of Governor, with Mike Stoney taking over from Kate Donegan as Governor
6. The continuation of demolition and construction work throughout the prison together with an increase in prisoner numbers. These major issues have brought about continual change within the prison with a consequential increase in the pressure on both management and staff. The Visiting Committee is of the view that the prison has continued to cope admirably with these pressures, in particular minimising the impact on prisoners.
7. The positive inspection of HMP Perth by HMP Inspectorate which found a very healthy picture of Perth Prison, a strong team ethic and drive to achieve high standards
8. The new visits and administration facility was now fully operational with the capacity for visitors increasing to 28 per session. This had significantly improved the facilities for both staff and visitors.
9. A full-time Family Contact Development Officer (FCDO) is in post and is involved in working to raise the profile of family contact within HMP Perth with prisoners, their families and external agencies with the plan for a Family Contact Centre

The Annual Report

I am delighted to present this, my second report on behalf of, and with the cooperation of, Perth VC members. We are a developing group and have had a successful year as a team; I should also like to thank the officers of Perth & Kinross and Dundee City councils for their support of the Visiting Committee in ensuring that the selection and interview procedures now follow the procedures recommended by the Scottish Government and the AVC, also the Governors PA Julie Sansford for typing up the visits for the committee.

Meetings

Meetings of the committee were held every two months in the Tower Boardroom of the Prison. We are grateful for the secretarial services of Yvonne Oliver and Mr Scott Hendry, who act for the clerk, Mrs G Taylor; all are employed by Perth & Kinross Council. Written reports were provided on prisoner statistics, misconduct/indiscipline, and general comments on prison matters. Reports were also provided by relevant managers on a range of services within the prison; Social Work, Learning Centre, Chaplaincy, Estates Management, Operations and Health Centre. All matters within the reports were open to questions and comments from members with further information being given on the spot or at the following meeting

The Visiting Committee has raised many issues with all levels of prison personnel throughout the year and is satisfied that these issues have been dealt with in the appropriate manner. We are confident that we shall enjoy the continued level of support from the new Governor and staff at all grades.

The Visiting Committee is pleased that both the kitchen and laundry facilities continue to work well. We understand there is a plan to exchange the premises the tailor and the laundry workshops are located in and upgrade these areas.

The Visiting Committee has concerns as to why secure prisoners were still not allowed to attend violence reduction courses, due to issues with regard to supervision of these prisoners and the limited number of courses, this was having an impact on their being allocated progression to be considered for parole.

The Visiting Committee carried out its statutory duty during the year, visited all parts of the prison, responded to prisoner requests and completed all the appropriate records.

We commend the current Governor Mike Stoney and the staff for their efforts in managing a challenging situation and thank them for their co-operation with the V.C. The visiting committee are as always, grateful for all the assistance given to members during the year.

Work of Visiting Committee

Chairman's report

Chris Hind was elected Chair of the Perth VC in 2009. Gordon Samson resigned his position of vice-chair and this role was taken over by Bobby Mangto. Stuart Brown h continued as Training Officer and the training provided has strengthened the team and there are plans for training for the next year. This year we have appointed members to specific roles i.e. monitoring visits, collating area visits and Equality & Diversity; these roles will further strengthen the work of the committee.

Training Report

Visiting Committee Training

Stuart Brown was elected as Local Training Coordinator for Perth Prison Visiting Committee in January 2010 to assist with Local and National Training. Following a recent review of Visiting Committees by the Scottish Government two of his key duties are to produce an annual training plan for Perth and the keep individual training records for each member which must be submitted annually to the AVC.

Stuart has been working with Mr Mark Melloy, Training Manager at Perth Prison to formulate suitable in-house training for members. By the end of March all active members had either undertaken or been enrolled on self-defence /breakaway training and anti-hostage training. Those using keys during visits had also been given proper instruction and are now fully competent. With regard to local training the practice of pairing off experienced members with relatively new members was actively encouraged. This provided them with an opportunity to gain practical learning experience on a number of

National Induction Training is planned over the coming months and speakers are being invited along to our Visiting Committee meetings to cover additional training topics. The national induction is to ensure the effective integration of members in to the organisation. The psychological manipulation module supports the development of knowledge and skills regarding the identification of psychological manipulation, the subsequent risks and responses and the effect that this has upon safety and security.

Association of Visiting Committees.

This is our national association, and our Maren Caldwell attends the business meetings. All AVC communications are circulated to our committee members. Maren has attended all of this years meetings.

AVC Report 2010

Prison Area Report

A Hall

The Accommodation is generally in good condition and well maintained; the cells were provided with tea/coffee and television. There was access to exercise and social areas.. Overall the Accommodation is kept clean and tidy.

B Hall

B Hall houses a mix of remand and convicted prisoners. Most prisoners when convicted will move to C Hall due to lack of facilities for work parties or programs from this hall. The hall is clean with adequate toilet and shower facilities

C Hall

The floors clean, rooms used for interviews were tidy, the cells were provided with tea/coffee and television. There was access to exercise and social areas. There was constant supervision – officers on duty were talking to prisoners – with what appeared to be a pleasant atmosphere at that time. All Officers on duty were friendly and helpful and appeared to treat the prisoners with respect. There were no Health & Safety issues of concern. The premises were fit for purpose with no Improvements required.

Prisoner's reception

The reception area was clean and tidy and generally in good condition. There was a First aider on duty when we visited; the holding area had a good number of seats and several noticeboards with information available on them; the information was current. There were 3 prisoners were being booked in when we attended, the officers had a list available of acceptable items for prisoner information and responsibilities for the items [SPS document - Acceptable list of Items. Revised Dec 2008]

Prisoners Property Area

Adequate for purpose

Healthcare and Mental Health care

The health centre appears to be in very good condition and fit for purpose. The facilities for prisoners are excellent. The health centre has various treatment rooms as well as "holding" rooms for prisoners waiting to be seen by members of the health centre team. All treatment rooms appear well equipped and up to a high standard. The nurses hold many clinics throughout the day and work on two shift patterns to cover from 7am until 10pm. The nurses also visit the halls to ensure prisoners who require medication are dispensed this without having to go the health centre. There are also numerous outside agencies that visit the centre such as dentistry, chiropody, dermatology and also for accessing outpatient and hospital admissions. The doctors work different days to ensure there is adequate cover.

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy is presently located in temporary accommodation on the ground floor of B Hall. No issues in regard to suitability of premises. The amount of space is limited and in particular causes difficulties in providing adequate facilities for worship by all faiths. Chairs on both sides approx. 4 rows of 5 chairs on each side. Hymn books on every

chair. Hand washing and tea making facilities. Graham Matthews [Minister] is very engaging with individuals and very positive and encouraging of those attending the service. Very positive atmosphere despite low attendance on the day of our visit it was very peaceful. Conditions were good and appeared suitable and fit for purpose. The construction of the new multi-faith centre will commence mid 2010 within the present on-going reconstruction programme. In addition to the pastoral care provided by the Chaplains, Fellowship Groups play a role in the care of prisoner's spiritual welfare. These groups are run by volunteers.

Volunteers also work in the visitors centre under the auspices of Cross Reach, a Church of Scotland charity.

Laundry

The Laundry is extremely busy and rather cramped for the amount of work required. Whilst the laundry is currently operating well there is to be a change of premises to the room next door which will give more room, better ventilation and the machines will be upgraded. This should have been finished by next year's report

Kitchen

The provision of food has generally been of an acceptable standard. Prisoners have on occasion complained 1) of quantity and 2) of food becoming cold before serving - this seems to have arisen with prisoners receiving their food towards the end of the serving. VC members have not experienced these conditions during their visits.

Segregation Unit

On our visits to the Segregation Unit we have observed that the difficulties with some prisoners, particularly those with mental health problems, are very high. In their work with such prisoners the officers show commendable patience and understanding.

Gymnasium

The area was recently built, 3 years ago with good shower and toilet facilities. There is storage space for cleaning equipment, a fridge and a laundry for dirty towels etc. There is an indoor football area / multi gym area for badminton and tennis, free weights area and fitness equipment that is maintained under an SPS contract. Prisoners are given an induction to the facilities. Capacity was for 30 prisoners if 2 officers were on duty, 15 at weekends when 1 was on duty, with a further 12 prisoners able to use the football facilities out of doors. There was over 70% uptake of facilities. There were many benefits to prisoners who were required to show they were either drug free or on a programme before they were allowed to access the facilities. There was a good relationship and rapport between staff and prisoners and one benefit was the 7-a-side indoor football tournament, the winners playing the staff side team.

Education

The staff and facilities provided by the Learning Centre make an excellent contribution to the welfare of the prisoners. We are grateful to Brian Cunningham, the Learning Centre Manager, and his staff for their commitment and dedication. Carnegie College provide the facilities. There have been successful peer mentoring programmes and also successful concerts

Library

There is a large variety of material on offer which caters for all abilities. The range covers classic works to modern authors and manuals. Perth and Kinross Library Service ensure a regular turnover of materials

Social Work

The Social Work Unit was inspected by the Social Work Inspection Agency in April 2010. This had been part of an overall inspection of prison-based social work units and services.

There are 6 Social Workers and a Team Leader. They each have a case load of 40 – 50 prisoners who have to be serving 4 years or more before they are seen by a Social Worker. There is an Integrated Case Management [ICM] meeting once a year for all prisoners which prepare a report for the Parole Board. The Social Workers have to prepare ICM reports and have a high case load of 250 – 270 prisoners seems to be high as protection prisoners only are seen twice a week. There is little provision for prisoners with less than 4 year sentences.

Phoenix House

The facilities are suitable for purpose. There is a high workload although prisoners are seen in accordance with SPS requirements

VT Plumbers

The premises are well stocked. All prisoners had safety equipment. There were facilities for tea/coffee and a break. All prisoners were proud of their achievements. The officer in charge may be leaving to go to the new Lowmoss prison when it opens. There is a concern as to who will take over for continuity

VT Hairdressers

The premises appeared suitable, with no improvements required or apparent Health & safety issues, the area was clean and tidy with no equipment lying around, teaching aids were available and an area to sit for theory work and to have a break. The officer in charge is returning to Lowmoss.

VT Bricklayers

This is located in a small shed which appeared to be in good condition and good light from outside access. There are toilets and break out areas for prisoners. Premises appeared fit for purpose and no issues in regard to suitability. Prisoners very involved in learning building skills and all tools and materials available to them for their use. No Health & Safety issues or improvements required, there were no issues identified as a concern by staff or prisoners

VT Tailors

This area is to be moved into the room next door to make room for a larger VT laundry. The area make straightjackets for the police cells. The area appears fit for purpose with sewing machines, overlockers etc. All prisoners said they enjoyed their work.

VT Wood assembly and Joiners

The areas were generally in good condition and well maintained. Training Plans for each area are in place and appear to be working well including the progression of prisoners through the overall programme There are contracts for the products.

Equality & Diversity

The SPS is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. This is evident in the treatment and provision for prisoners at HMP Perth. A member of the VC has been invited to the Equality and Diversity Meetings in 2010 - 2011

Link Centre

The Link Centre co-ordinates the work of several Agencies in assisting prisoners with their difficulties relating to matters occurring both within and outwith the prison. The VC does not generally receive prisoner referrals regarding this area of the Prison's work. The formal launch of the Tayside inter-agency protocols, 'Pathways for Short-term Prisoners', took place on 25 June 2010, the development of these protocols are being held up as best practice across public sector prisons and across Scotland.

The Agencies which assist prisoners are:-

Shelter Housing Aid Centre

Job Centre Plus

Criminal Justice Tayside

Criminal Justice Fife

Apex

Careers Scotland

Phoenix futures

Alcoholics Anon

Gamblers Anon

NCH Scotland

Six Circle

Future Challenges for HMP Perth

A local Strategic Assessment had been produced, in line with national policy, by Intel Management Unit, outlining the direct threats to HMP Perth. It was noted that the three major threats were recognised as drugs, mobile telephones and violence. Staff were currently involved in a joint police operation under the "Safer Scotland" initiative and continued to liaise with Community Police to increase partnership working within the local area.

Drugs & Mobile Phones

The frequency of incidents relating to drugs and mobile phones entering and within the prison has been a continuing concern to the VC and to the prison staff. Ideas from prisons in other parts of the country are being looked at, such as signal blocking.

Visiting Committee Membership

There were **two** resignations during the period:

The Committee has a compliment of 19 members [10 appointed by Perth and 9 appointed by Dundee] and there are currently 4 vacancies.

Visits to the Prison

There were 107 visits made to the Prison by our members. All members visited on a rota basis to monitor conditions within the prison and to ensure all prisoners has access to a member of the Visiting Committee throughout the year. Rota visits will continue to be made on a weekly basis, rather than fortnightly. In addition, members made visits at other times, sometimes on a follow-up basis to prisoner complaints, sometimes to visit and monitor particular parts of the prison.

Meetings

Meetings of the committee were held every two months in the New Boardroom of the Prison. We are grateful for the secretarial services of Yvonne Oliver, and Scott Hendry, who are employed by Perth & Kinross Council.

The Governor or representative has attended part of each meeting since his appointment.

Written reports were provided on prisoner statistics, misconduct/indiscipline, and general comments on prison matters. Reports were also provided by relevant managers on a range of services within the prison; Social Work, Learning Centre, Chaplaincy, Estates Management, Operations and Health Centre. All matters within the reports were open to questions and comments from members with further information being given on the spot or at the following meeting.

Members were also kept up to date with the work of the Association of Visiting Committees of which Neil Powrie is Chairman. The Review of Visiting Committees is still on-going and changes are still required especially the renaming to an Independent Monitoring Board.

On behalf of all members of Perth Prison Visiting Committee I wish to thank the Governor, Deputy Governor, members of the Senior Management Team, all Officers and Administrative Staff for their courtesy and assistance throughout the last year.

Chris Hind

Chair Perth Visiting Committee

MEMBERS OF PERTH PRISON VISITING COMMITTEE

No.	Name	Appointing authority	Date appointed	Committee meetings attended in 2010 / 11	
1	C Bailey	Dundee	2009	6	
2	S Brand	Perth	2009	5	
3	S Brown	Perth	2009	6	
4	M Caldwell	Perth	2009	6	
5	E Carroll	Dundee	2009	4	
6	A Craig	Perth	2009	4	
7	C Hind	Dundee	2006	5	
8	G Jain	Perth	< 2007	4	
9	V Joiner	Dundee	2009	6	
10	R Mangto	Perth	2010	6	
11	Cllr H Stewart	Perth	<2007	1	
12	N Powrie	Dundee	< 2007	2	
13	J Reid	Dundee	2007	2	
14	G Samson	Dundee	< 2007	3	
15	S Sinclair	Perth	2009	3	
16	Vacant	Perth			
17	Vacant	Perth			
18	Vacant	Dundee			
19	Vacant	Perth			