
STATES OF JERSEY



PRISON BOARD OF VISITORS: ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Presented to the States on 15th May 2012
by the Minister for Home Affairs

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

In accordance with Article 6 of the Prison (Jersey) Law 1957, the following Jurats were appointed by the Superior Number of the Royal Court on 16th December 2010 to constitute the Prison Board of Visitors for the year 2011 –

Jurat J.C. Tibbo (Chairman)
Jurat J. Le Breton (Vice-Chairman)
Jurat Mrs. J.M. Clapham
Jurat Mrs. L.J. King
Jurat J.R.P.F. Liddiard
Jurat R.J. Kerley
Jurat Mrs. S. Marett-Crosby

Jurat Mrs. King retired in March 2011 and was replaced by Jurat Mrs. S. Milner. Jurat Liddiard retired in May 2011 and was replaced by Jurat A. Olsen.

Jurat Tibbo retired in January 2012 after 14 years on the Board, for 7½ years of which he served as Chairman. The Board would like to acknowledge his commitment and his dedication to the work of the Board, to the Prison and to the welfare of the prisoners. Jurat Tibbo was replaced on the Board by Jurat P. Morgan, and Jurat R. Kerley was appointed Chairman.

Role of the Board of Visitors

The Board of Visitors provides a necessary outside perspective on the life and work of the Prison. The work of the Board can therefore be both complex and sensitive. The principal duty of the Board is to satisfy itself as to the operation of the Prison, and in particular the treatment of prisoners.

All prisoners are made aware of the Board of Visitors, that the Board visits the Prison once a month and that a Board member makes a further visit some time between the Board's monthly meeting. Each Wing has a box into which prisoners can put their requests to see the Board or the visiting member. Although some requests are beyond the remit of the Board, it will always listen to and where necessary look into the prisoner's complaint and if possible assist in resolving the problem.

Requests to see the Board

During the year there were 35 applications to see the Board at its monthly meetings held at La Moye and a further 46 applications to see the individual member of the Board visiting between meetings. Requests for assistance covered a wide variety of subjects – from problems in locating personal possessions, legal concerns and family issues, to health and medical problems. In addition, the Board dealt with 3 appeals against adjudications for breaches of Prison Rules.

A quorum for a meeting of the Board is 3. On average, 4 members attended each monthly meeting. All monthly meetings of the Board and its meetings with prisoners are minuted. A note is also kept of the subsequent action taken.

Liaison with Home Affairs

The Board continued to hold regular meetings with the Minister for Home Affairs.

Three such meetings took place during 2011 and were attended by the Minister, the Assistant Minister and the Chief Officer, as well as the Prison Governor. These meetings continue to be a useful forum for exchanging views on a variety of matters relating to the Prison, including problems affecting prisoner welfare.

Staff

During the year the major problems surrounding staffing were successfully dealt with. The redeployment of Operational Service Grade officers has proved a success, with all candidates either moving to the new role of Operations Officer or finding suitable positions in other States Departments.

Recruiting for the new Operations Officers vacancies was very successful, and 14 new recruits commenced training at the beginning of January 2012. The standard of candidates was extremely high and it is expected that they will make a welcomed addition to officer numbers.

The Prison Governor and 6 members of staff were presented with Prison Service (Operational) Duties Long Service and Good Conduct medals at Government House on 14th December 2011. The Board was delighted that the dedication and commitment of these officers had been recognised.

Budget

The Board is pleased to note that Phase 4 of the building programme, which includes the new visitors' room and staff facilities, has progressed well throughout the year and should be in use by July 2012. A combination of under-spends in the year's revenue budget was transferred to the capital vote to fund the redevelopment of the horticultural compound. Planning approval has been received and work on the project is under way.

Operational

The highest number of prisoners held in La Moye on any day in 2011 was 200, which was in July. The daily average throughout the year was 184. Included among these figures are those prisoners who required greater vigilance due to being considered in danger of self-harm.

It is encouraging to see that most prisoners take advantage of the many facilities and educational programmes open to them. The sports hall and astro-turf football pitch are particularly well used, as are the library and art room.

Art Exhibition

The 'Inside Out' exhibition of prisoners' art and crafts has become a regular fixture in the calendar at the Harbour Gallery, St. Aubin. The success of the exhibition has encouraged a number of prisoners to take advantage of the art facilities at La Moye and they have produced some excellent work. Part of the proceeds from the sales of the artwork goes to providing materials, and part to the artist.

Remand times

The Board continues to be concerned at the length of time that some prisoners are held on remand. The Board appreciates that the reasons for delays are often unavoidable. However, when delays do occur and remand time builds up, the Board monitors the situation and makes every effort to ensure that dates for either trial or sentencing are fixed as swiftly as possible.

Juvenile and Young Offenders

Another ongoing concern of the Board is that of juvenile and young offenders who are held at La Moye. In the case of male offenders they are held separate from, but alongside, adult inmates. A main concern of the Board is that male young offenders are held on the same floor as the juvenile offenders. Board members regularly visit the juvenile and young offenders Wing, and particular attention is paid when young offenders are being held there. Despite its unsatisfactory location, the Wing provides excellent facilities and the staff work very hard to ensure the well-being of the young offenders.

In the case of female juvenile and young offenders, they are held with the adult female prisoners. The Board considers this to be highly undesirable. The Board, however, recognises that the instances when female juvenile and young offenders are held are far less frequent than the males. If female juvenile and young offenders were to be held separately from the adults, they would frequently be in solitary confinement and the Board considers that to be even less desirable. As with the males, the Board takes particular care to check on the welfare of female young offenders and is aware that the staff on the Wing are alert to potential difficulties.

The Board continues to monitor the situation and the matter is frequently discussed at meetings with the Minister for Home Affairs.

Offenders suffering from Emotional and Mental Health Issues

There are a number of prisoners who suffer from either emotional or mental health problems who are well-known to the Board and who cause the Board considerable concern. The complexity of their problems and the reliance on professional reports makes this a most difficult and a sensitive area of the Board's work. The Board, with the Prison Governor's support, does all it can to ensure that the prisoners receive the best possible treatment. The Board liaises with the Chaplaincy Team on many of these cases.

Summary

The Board has been encouraged by the improvements to both the buildings and facilities that have been made throughout the year. The educational and rehabilitation programmes, drug counselling and work schemes are all being made good use of by the prisoners, who also receive excellent support from both the Prison Staff and the Probation Service. The Board is aware that there is no room for complacency and feels that it is vital that ongoing investment is made in buildings, facilities and staff.

It has been another busy year for the Board, which would like to express its thanks to the Prison Governor and to his staff for their assistance and co-operation throughout the year.

Jurat R.J. Kerley
Chairman,
Prison Board of Visitors
April 2012