

PRISON OFFICERS'
ASSOCIATION

PRISON OFFICER

AUTUMN / WINTER 2021



*The Prison Officers' Association
would like to wish all our Members
a very happy and safe
Christmas and New Year*





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Example of a €10,000 AVC lump sum (example based on paying higher rate tax at 40%)

AVC Payment made by officer	€10,000
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Profit	€3,650

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Warning: The value of your investment may go down as well as up.

Warning: The values quoted do not take account of investment gains or losses.

Warning: Pension and Tax Legislation is subject to change.

*Assumes nil investment growth and does not take account of the annual management charge of 1%.

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K D Retirement Services Ltd

t/a Capital Advisory Services, Suite 114, The Capel Building,
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ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

I am now inviting submissions to be included in the Spring Newsletter.

Any Member who wished to submit articles and photographs, please send submissions by Friday 25th February 2022

to admin@poa.ie

ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR THE SPRING NEWSLETTER MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL TO admin@poa.ie

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Colleagues,

Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of the Prison Officers Magazine. May I take this opportunity to wish all Members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. At this time of year our thoughts and prayers are with all who have lost loved ones during the year. Sadly, since the publication of our last magazine we have lost another colleague. Officer Owen McDonald, Midlands Prison passed away on Monday 6th September 2021. Our thoughts and prayers are with Owen's family, friends and colleagues in the Midlands Prison and the wider Prison Service. May Owen rest in peace. As we approach our twenty second month of the Covid-19 pandemic it is important that we acknowledge the tremendous work and dedication displayed by our members. Our members have repeatedly performed above and beyond under such challenging conditions. Our members have overcome the challenges of repeated Covid-19 outbreaks with commitment, motivation, and professionalism.



it easier for members to deal with their day-to-day household and domestic bills. Eric also explains how the Credit Union's loan and share insurance works and why it's best for members to avail of this fantastic cover which is free of charge to all PRISCU members.

RETIREMENT FUNCTION

On Tuesday the 16th November 2021, the Prison Officers' Association honoured its members who retired during 2020 at a retirement function held at the Westin Hotel, College Green, Westmoreland St, Dublin. Mr Tony Power President POA welcomed all to the retirement function and wished everyone well for the future. Mr John Clinton General Secretary paid tribute to the men and women who have retired in his address and wished everyone a long and happy retirement. Read more inside.

COVID-19

Over the last number of weeks there has been an exponential increase of positive cases among the prison population which reflects what is occurring in the community. Prisoner cases have increased by 44% and staff positive cases have increased by 20%. Based on these figures there can be no surprise that three outbreaks have occurred in the Prison Service at Cloverhill, Midlands and Mountjoy Prisons. When outbreaks occur an Outbreak Control Team (OCT) meeting will be scheduled. These meetings are normally held daily and continue for the duration of the Covid outbreak. National Officers attend all OCT meetings which provides us with an opportunity to listen to the clinical advice, Public Health direction and general feedback regarding issues which impact on the individual prison and across the wider estate.

PAY

The first pay adjustment related to the new public service agreement – Building Momentum was paid with effect from Friday 1st October 2021. The next pay adjustment due related to the public service agreement – Building Momentum is a 1% increase in annualised basic salaries through a sectoral bargaining fund, this is due with effect from Tuesday 1st February 2022.

CREDIT UNION

In this issue Eric Handbridge, CEO Prison Service Credit Union discusses the Credit Union's new enhanced budget accounts and how they have made

RPO'S

Since our last publication, RPO classes 05/20, 01/21, 02/21, 03/21 and 04/21 have completed their training in the IPSC. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions

imposed on us by Covid-19, there was no official graduation for these classes. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish all new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all.

NEC

Included in this issue are two NEC bulletins from 5th October 2021 and 16th & 17th November 2021. They are a summary of the issues raised at each National Executive Council Meetings.

RUSTY RAMBLERS

In July the Rusty Ramblers excursions took them to the Waterford/Tipperary border "The Coumshingaun Loop". The Rusty's enjoyed the wonderful scenic views of Coumshingaun. In August the Rusty's were in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Co Laois. In September the Rusty's took a trip to Sligo/Donegal to hike the Benbulbin. This year the Rusty's planned their international trip to Andorra. However due to the Covid-19 pandemic their trip was cancelled. Read more inside.

BRANCH NEWS

In Castlerea Prison Michael Bohan took on the challenge of running 250km during the month of April 2021. Michael's motivation to complete such a challenge was in memory of a dear friend Brendan Meehan. Michael raised money for Cry (Cardiac Risk in the Young) Ireland. CRY is a registered charity that provides free counselling and support for families affected by sudden unexplained death or cardiac conditions. Branch News and Christmas wishes are also included from Cloverhill Prison, Midlands Prison and Wheatfield Prison.

WEBSITE AND EMAIL ACCESS TO POA INFORMATION

To access information on the website you must be signed up as a member. Information is restricted

to members and can only be accessed by signing up. Any member who wishes to sign up for Website and Email Access please email admin@poa.ie and a username and password for the Members Section will be issued and your personal email address will be added to our members database. You will then receive regular email updates from Headquarters.

CONCLUSION

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the members for reading this magazine. I would also like to thank all the Branches and members who have contributed articles to the magazine. It is vital that information both Industrial Relations and Local News is disseminated to all members to ensure an accurate account of how the Prison Officers' Association carries out its business. I cannot emphasize enough the vital importance for members to regularly check notice boards, sign up for emails and check the POA Website as presently it is not possible for Local Branches to hold meetings. This will allow you to keep up to date with all that is going on within the Union. Wishing all Members and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dermot Kelly Editor



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



Dear Members

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, your families and all your loved ones a very Happy Christmas this year. For those of you who are working over the festive period I wish you well and hope that your work commitments will not affect your enjoyment or that of your families.

With Covid-19, the last twelve months, in fact, almost the past 2 years have been an extremely strange and challenging time for everybody in the country and it has been no different for the Union and its representatives. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the National Executive Council and the Local Representatives for their support and efforts over the last twelve months. Without your participation the union could not survive and ultimately the wider membership would be at a loss. As the three-year term of office comes to an end for all local Branch Representatives in January 2022, I would like to encourage members to put yourselves forward to represent the union for the new term to ensure we remain united and strong into the future. I would also like to pay tribute to the dedication of every member, your efforts in limiting the number of cases of Covid-19 in our prisons has not gone unnoticed.

Despite the pandemic, recruitment has continued in the Irish Prison Service, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all those who have joined the ranks over the past 12 months. To those who have departed I wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement. Unfortunately, due to the Covid situation we felt we had no choice but to postpone the December Retirement Function, but work is already ongoing to reschedule as soon as public health advice allows.

I would like to wish all of those who are out long term sick a speedy recovery. I would like to express our best wishes and support to our colleagues who were subjected to assault on duty throughout the year, I hope that they can return to good health as quickly as possible.

Finally, Christmas is a special time of the year, so it is appropriate that we remember our colleagues, relatives and friends who have passed away during the year especially our colleague Owen (Rake) McDonald who tragically passed away since last Christmas's edition of the Prison Officer magazine. May they rest in peace. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this most difficult time.

Tony Power, President

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Dear Members

It's Christmas time again and on behalf of my colleagues on the National Executive Council and on my own behalf, I am delighted to convey Christmas Greetings by wishing each member, their families and loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members for your continuing support of the Prison Officers' Association during the year.

The past year saw the Union working on your behalf on numerous matters including the many issues and challenges that have faced us all from the coronavirus pandemic. We were only into the new year when we witnessed an everchanging position regarding the rollout of vaccines with little thought been given or no clarification as to when or how vaccines would be given to Prison Staff. Given the form of enclosed setting that Prison Staff work in, one would have expected the rollout of vaccines to be a major priority. We eventually got movement after great efforts went into highlighting this very serious issue and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for your support on this most challenging matter.

The past year also saw the ratification of a new Public Service Agreement by ICTU affiliated Public Service Unions. The new Public Service Agreement Building Momentum will run from 1st January 2021 until 31st December 2022. This is a shorter time period than usual therefore the ICTU Public Services Committee expects that negotiations on a successor agreement would begin in the early summer of 2022. Given the economic issue related to the coronavirus pandemic as many sectors of our economy were affected and some restrictions still remain the next set of negotiations on a Public Service Pay agreement could prove to be very difficult.

The first pay adjustment of 1% under the Building Momentum agreement was paid with effect from Friday 1st October 2021, leaving two remaining adjustments a 1% increase from Tuesday 1st February 2022 and a 1% increase from Saturday 1st October 2022.

On a more personal note, to the members of the Prison Service who were victims of serious assaults and other traumatic incidents while carrying out their duties on behalf of the State over the past year, I would particularly like to take this opportunity to extend to you best wishes from all on the National Executive Council.

Once again, the Union recently had great pleasure in honouring members that retired. On Tuesday 16th November 2021, the Prison Officers' Association's held a retirement function to cater for members that retired during 2020. It wasn't possible to hold this event last year due to the health restrictions, so this was a rescheduled event. None the less the retirement function for the 2020 retirees was a very successful occasion. To those members who retired the year and their families, I wish them a good health and an enjoyable retirement. It's well deserved unfortunately due to the recent rising case numbers and Public Health concerns the December Annual Retirement Function to honour those that retired in 2021 has had to be rescheduled for the New Year when hopefully it will be safer to hold such an event as the Union gets great satisfaction from honouring our retirees.

Unfortunately, at this special time of year our thoughts turn to those that are no longer with us and those that are unwell. Our prayers and best wishes are with those members who are currently ill as well as those friends, relatives and colleagues who have passed away during the year. Sadly, over the past year our friend and colleague Owen McDonald from the Midlands Branch passed away. I am sure we are all thinking of Owen's family at this time.

Christmas is a special time of year for all, especially the family. For many of our members' families, their loved ones will be at work in the Prison Service on behalf of the State over the Christmas period. All too often their efforts go unnoticed and unappreciated when the time comes to pass out messages of appreciation, so to all those members who will be on duty, I want to thank you and wish you and your families well over the Christmas period.



John Clinton, General Secretary

PAY

Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) 2021-2022

FOR CERTAINTY, FOR SECURITY, FOR PROGRESS

The new Public Service Agreement 'Building Momentum' will deliver pay rises of up to 3% over two years period from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2022. This is a shorter time period than usual therefore the ICTU Public Services Committee expects that negotiations on a successor agreement would begin in the early summer of 2022. It is clearly stated that this new agreement is an extension of previous public service agreements including the PSSA. The provisions of previous agreements apply save where varied by this agreement. Pay adjustments pertained in this new Public Service Agreement are as follows:-

COMPLETED

1st October 2021 : A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% or €500, whichever is greater.



REMAINING MEASURES:-

1st February 2022 The equivalent of a 1% increase in annualised basic salaries to be used as a Sectoral Bargaining Fund.

1st October 2022 A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% or €500, whichever is greater.

PRISON OFFICERS' MEDICAL AID INSURANCE

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- ✉ Email us at info@pomas.ie

If you or your partner are not with us...

Is it not time to **JOIN US?**



It's great that I have been given the green light to address you again. In the last issue I discussed loans and the advantages of getting a loan through Prison Service Credit Union (PRISCU) as opposed getting it elsewhere. I received great feedback from members regarding consolidating their loans and would ask all our members to come talk to me if you are experiencing any financial problems and let's see if we can assist you in any way to try ease any financial pressures you may be experiencing.

In this issue I will be discussing our new enhanced budget accounts and how we've made it easier for members to deal with their day-to-day household and domestic bills. I will also be explaining how our loan and share insurance works and why it's best for members to avail of this fantastic cover which is free of charge to all PRISCU members.

Enhanced Budget Accounts

In November 2020 we launched our enhanced budget accounts. Budget accounts were set up for a specific purpose and this was to enable members budget for their household bills for the year ahead. Why not allow us ease the burden of domestic bill payments by opening an enhanced budget account today.

We have over 400 active enhanced budget accounts. These accounts are set up by members completing a budget account application form which can be downloaded from our website (www.priscu.ie) and returned to the credit union. When opened, a member will receive a unique IBAN & BIC which is specific to individual members. Once a member has received their IBAN & BIC they contact their utility provider and change their current direct debit or set up a new one using your new budget account details. It's that simple.

On the reverse side of the budget application form, a member will list all their utility bills which you want to pay through your budget account and we will calculate how much needs to be deducted from your salary to cover these bills for the year. You can add new utilities at any time and we will simply re-calculate your fortnightly deduction. It makes sense for members to sign up to a budget account and avail of this unique service specifically designed for our members. It gives members the peace of mind, knowing that all their bill will be covered going forward and the deduction is taken at source.

Full terms and conditions can be found on our budget account application Form which can be downloaded from our website or simply contact the office via e-mail (info@priscu.ie)

and request one to be sent to you. We encourage all members to take the sting out of bill payments and allow us take care of them by opening an enhanced budget account today and let us manage all your bills for you.

Loan & Share Insurance

Many of our members are not aware that we insure your share and loan balances in the event of your demise. This can be a very sensitive subject and is not something that people like to discuss openly. Death is very much a reality and no one knows when it is going to land on our doorstep. It is for this very reason that I want to discuss it with you today.

I strongly encourage ALL members to complete a Form of Nomination with us. This form gives you, the member, an opportunity to elect someone to receive your share balance in the event of your death. There are certain limits which I will discuss later on. If a member has not got a fully completed Form of Nomination, we cannot release their funds until we receive a grant of probate¹. This can be a very long-winded process and could take anything up to two years to issue if there are any complications.

The Policy

Simply put, we have all our members shares insured up to a maximum of €25,000 and loans are insured up to a maximum of €75,000. The following table shows the age a member's shares are "locked in".

Age		Percentage Covered
0-54 Years	-	100%
55-59 Years	-	75%
60-64 Years	-	50%
65-69 Years	-	25%
Over 70 Years	-	No Cover

The above table does not indicate that once a member reaches the age of 55 their share insurance cover reduces to 75% of their share balance. It means that at the age of 55 your shares are insured up to 100%, meaning that if you withdraw from your shares after your 55th birthday the lowest balance has the 100% cover and the remainder is covered at 75%.

CREDIT UNION

This is best explained by the following examples-

EXAMPLE I

**Member with loan balance of €20,000, dies age 54.
Share balance of €12,500. Loan balance cleared in full. Nominee receives €25,000 i.e.,
€12,500 share balance at time of death plus €12,500 insurance (100%)**

EXAMPLE II

**Member with loan balance of €45,000, dies age 56. Share balance €12,500 on 55th birthday,
however the member withdrew €10,000 after his 55th birthday but lodged it back again days later.
Loan balance cleared in full. Nominee receives €22,500 i.e., €12,500 share balance at the time of
death plus insurance cover of €10,000 (100% on €2,500 low balance because of the €10k withdrawal
& 75% cover on the €10,000 lodged after 55th birthday)**

EXAMPLE III

**Member with loan balance of €75,000, dies age 54. Share balance €30,000.
Loan balance cleared in full. Nominee receives €55,000 i.e., €30,000 balance at time of death
plus €25,000 insurance (100% up to max of €25k)**

As you can see from the examples above, it makes sense to leave funds in your share account. Our insurance cover acts as an insurance policy that doesn't cost you a cent and because of our low-rate loans (4.75% standard rate (4.86% Apr.)), it makes perfect sense to leave your shares alone and just let them build up and borrow on the strength of them, this is especially worthwhile if you avail of a loan within shares at a staggering rate of 2.99% (3.04% Apr.).

For further clarity on the above you can contact the credit union and I will be delighted to go through the insurance policy in more detail with you, alternatively you can visit our website for more information (www.priscu.ie).

In my next article I will be going through PCP finance and compare it to finance with ourselves and how it differs and what that difference means to you.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all our members and indeed all the readers of this magazine a very Merry Christmas with all my good wishes for the year ahead.

Eric Handbridge, CEO
Prison Service Credit Union Limited, (Endnotes)

¹ Grant of probate is an authority issued from the High Court Probate division which allows the Executors sign all documents that the deceased would have had power to sign

BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER

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- BUDGET ACCOUNT FACILITY
- ONLINE SERVICE
- MEMBER OWNED
- NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATION
- PROFESSIONAL STAFF
- QUARTERLY MEMBER'S DRAW

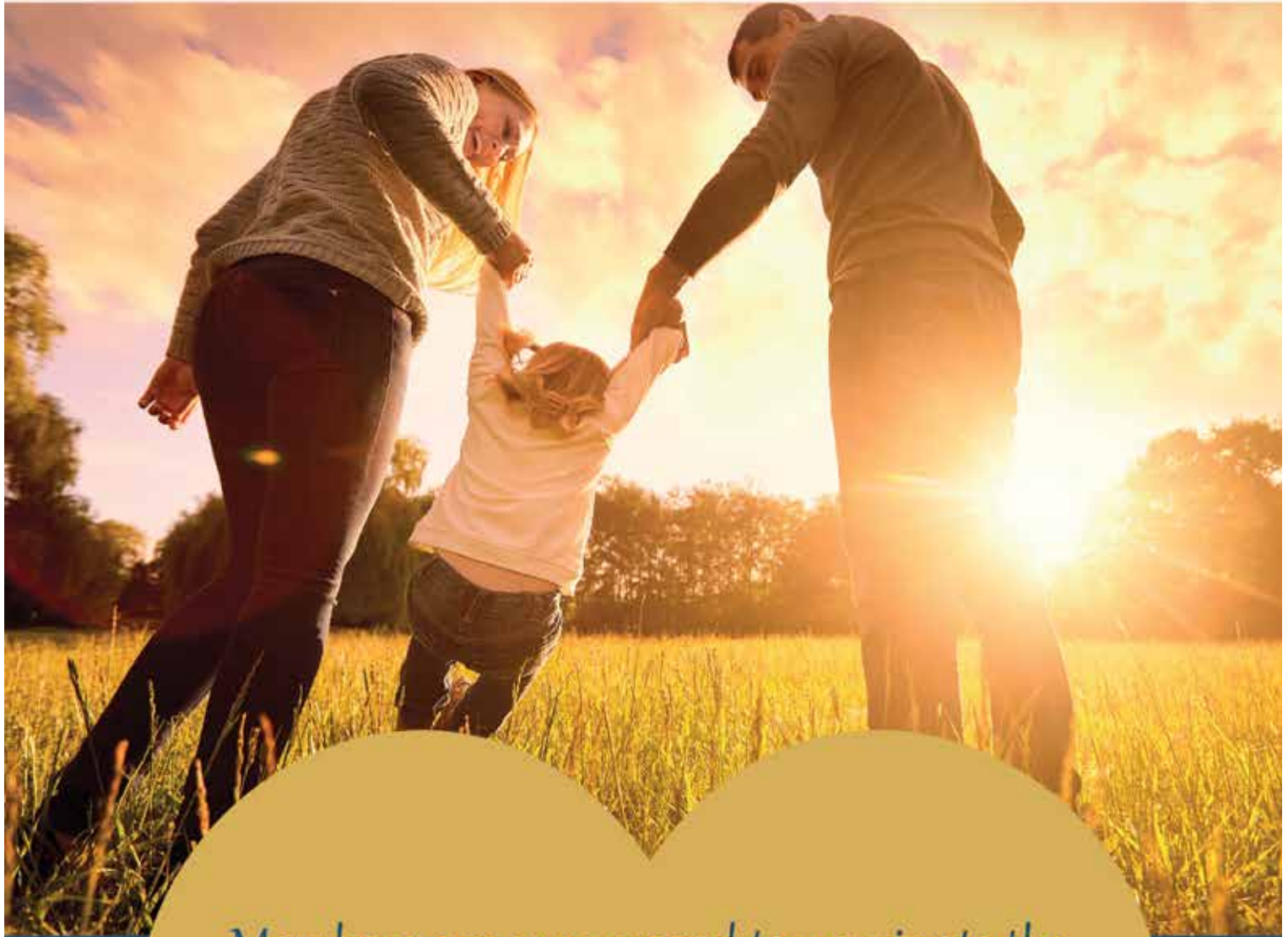


CONTACT US

WWW.PRISCU.IE OR INFO@PRISCU.IE

PRISON SERVICE CREDIT UNION LTD
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YOUR NOMINATION



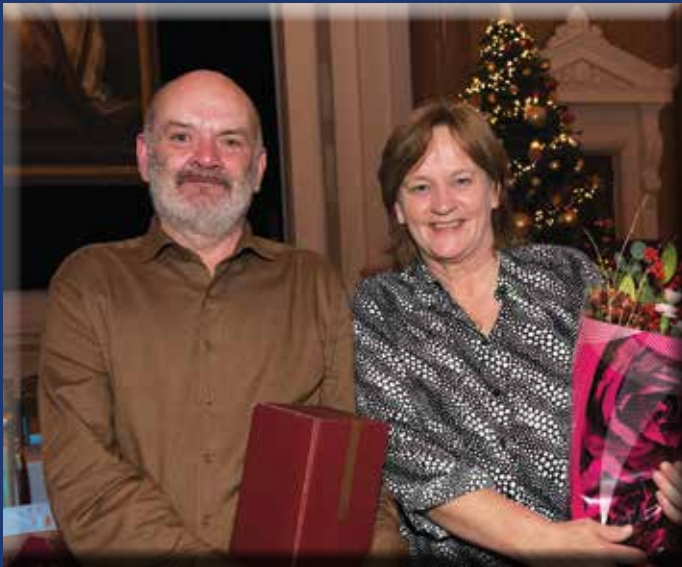
Members are encouraged to nominate the proceeds of your account in the event of your passing. For your peace of mind and that of your family complete your Nomination today. Forms can be downloaded from our website.

Prison Officers Association Retirement Function 2021

On Tuesday the 16th November 2021, the Prison Officers' Association honoured its members who retired during 2020 at a retirement function held at the Westin Hotel, College Green, Westmoreland St, Dublin. In 2020 our retirement night was suspended due to the ongoing Public Health restrictions related to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Mr Tony Power President POA welcomed all to the retirement function and wished everyone well for the future. Mr John Clinton General Secretary paid tribute to the men and women who have retired in his address and wished everyone a long and happy retirement. Many retirees complimented the Prison Officers' Association for this recognition as the POA are one of the few unions that honour their members in this way. All guests were honoured with a token of our appreciation for their long and dedicated service and for their loyalty and support to the Union. The National Executive Council wishes all those who retired a long and healthy retirement.



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



RETIREMENT FUNCTION 2021



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*Includes Stamp Duty. If family hold medical cover. AbbeyAutoline travel insurance is administered and underwritten by MAPFRE ASSISTANCE Agency Ireland. Prestige Underwriting Services (Ireland) Limited, trading as AbbeyAutoline, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Reg No: 119908.

RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING

RECRUIT PRISON OFFICER CLASS 05/20

On Friday 26th February 2021 the Recruit Prison Officers Class 05/2020 completed their training in the Irish Prison Service College. After 12 weeks of training these men and women have been posted to their assigned prisons for further training and development. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish these new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all. Unfortunately this year there was no official Graduation or Class photo due to the restrictions imposed on us by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Please see in the following pages individual photos.

2020



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING





Inspire Workplaces - On line Resources

Inspire Workplaces 24/7 counselling service is available to all Irish Prison Staff (formerly Carecall). This is an important enhancement of the Irish Prison Service EAP, Prison staff still have full access to local SSO's and centrally based EAO's and are encouraged to continue to engage with local SSO's and EAO's who are available to provide advice and support on a range of issues and may well suggest a referral to Inspire Workplaces where more focused emotional support is considered to be helpful. The EAP can be contacted at 043-333 5316 or at eapsupport@irishprisons.ie

The Counselling Service is a confidential employee support service designed to support employees resolve personal or work related concerns, through telephone and on-line support and telephone or face to face counselling (up to 6 sessions) free of charge to all serving Prison staff.

Attendance at counselling sessions must be undertaken when off duty. Appointments are available in the evenings and at week-ends. However, once counselling sessions are scheduled for you, any cancellations within 24 hours or non-attendances for whatever reason will be included in the 6 sessions allowed. Should you cancel your appointment within 24 hours or indeed not turn up for one of your scheduled sessions this incurs a financial cost but more importantly your benefit from the course of 6 sessions provided is reduced as a consequence. You are strongly encouraged to attend all scheduled sessions and when it is necessary, to provide more than 24 hours' notice to your counsellor in the event you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment

In addition to the counselling service proved by Inspire Workplaces, prison staff also have access to extensive on-line support provided by Inspire Workplaces via their website, www.inspirewellbeing.org.

When you are browsing the website, Inspire Workplaces have a menu of options on the top right hand corner, one of which is a login option. The log in details for this service, for prison staff are:

Login: [irishprisonservice](#) Password: [ips@eap](#) (all lower case)

There are 3 options to choose from on the left of the home page:

1. On-line tests – This section includes optional self-report tests on Stress and Alcohol consumption and may well provide an indication that further support is warranted.
2. Self-help library – This sections includes advice and support on topics including amongst others anger, anxiety, bereavement, my family, sleep, stress, and my work. Under each of these topics there is a number of sub-categories. For example, if you click on My Family, you are directed to advice on 'empty nest syndrome' and 'single parenthood' and the advice and guidelines contained in these sections are certainly well worth a look.
3. Useful reports – this section lists reports on key topics like Mindfulness and Mental Health and Work and also includes reports from the World Health Organisation report.

The website also has a section to support students, either yourself if you are studying or one of your children.

If you would like to keep in touch with Inspire Workplaces, you can enter your email address. They can also be followed via Facebook, Twitter and you may wish to view recommended YouTube videos.

To access counselling or telephone support from Inspire Workplaces, you can contact them 24/7 on their helpline number at: 1800 817 433

INFORMATION BULLETIN

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 5th OCTOBER 2021

There were eleven main headings on the Agenda for the NEC meeting held on Tuesday 5th October 2021. ITEMS 1 – 3 related generally to Pay and Allowances issues. ITEMS 4 – 11 related to general matters that are regularly dealt with by the POA.

Please see below a summary regarding the main headings that were dealt with on the Agenda of this NEC meeting.

The NEC was given the following briefings under headings 1 – 3 relating to Pay & Allowances issues:

PAY & ALLOWANCES

ITEM 1: Pay

The first pay adjustment related to the new public service agreement – Building Momentum a general round increase worth 1% of gross pay or €00 a year, whichever is the greater, was due with effect from Friday 1st October 2021.

There was a copy of Circular 19/2021 issued in the executive file. Circular 19/2021 was issued from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) on Friday 1st October 2021. This Circular sets out pay increases due on 1st October 2021 as provided for in Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021 - 2022.

The IPS have informed the Union that DPER have only now signed off on the pay increases for Killarney, so

the 1% increase won't be in the pay cheques until Thursday 21st October 2021.

Transformation: There were ten meetings/engagements held with the Irish Prison Service, since the last National Executive Council meeting, which was held on Thursday 2nd September 2021, relating to the on-going Transformation Process provided for under the Public Service Pay Agreements.

The following items were among those included on the agenda for these meetings/engagements:

Dóchas

An issue has arisen in the Dóchas regarding the allocation of N/G on the day. As outlined at the previous NEC, any issues should in the first instance be raised at LM & RC and then escalated to NM & RC where agreement cannot be reached. When further information is to hand the matter will be dealt with accordingly.

Finance

The IPS have introduced a "Prisoner Initiatives Development Fund". The IPS chose to exclude the POA from this process notwithstanding the possibility of a number of industrial relations implications emerging. The POA have sought immediate engagement regarding this potential breach of National Wage Agreements.

Healthcare

There is currently a Nationwide

Nursing shortage which is impacting on the staffing numbers at various Prison. The shortage is not only impacting on the recruitment of permanent nurses but also on the support from Agency Nurses. The POA have put a number of proposals to management in a bid to alleviate this problem. A meeting has been scheduled with the Care & Rehabilitation Directorate in respect of this issue.

PSEC

There are a number of issues outstanding at PSEC Dublin including:

- Recalling PSEC staff to Prisons in breach of PFOC.
- Methodology for recalling PSEC staff.
- Use of 4 Quarter points to detail staff.

The PSEC staff are facing a situation where the method used to recall them changes during the quarter and is not consistent with the PFOC. The National Officer's and the PSEC Dublin branch will meet to prepare a submission for NM & RC with a date set aside for the WRC if required.

Shelton

An issue arose at Shelton in relation to the proposed opening of a new visiting area without the appropriate consultation with the staff side. A recent meeting was held at Shelton to discuss the current impasse and the

POA position was clearly outlined to all parties in respect of adherence to current agreements.

The National Executive Council was briefed regarding the aforementioned ten meetings and informed of the forthcoming schedule of meetings.

ITEM 2: Pensions

It was reported at the July NEC meeting that there was a meeting held on Thursday 1st July 2021, with the Unions legal advisors and Counsel on a number of pension related matters. The issues discussed were outlined to the meeting in particular questions put to Counsel related to having to sign on for jobseekers' allowances for members that are on the post 1995 pension scheme, issues relating to taking up employment following retirement for members that are on the post 1995 pension scheme and matters relating to the supplementary pension for members that are in the Single Public Service pension scheme. The Union recently received correspondence from our legal advisors outlining that

Counsel believes that the work associated with the pension issues raised will take somewhat longer than originally expected and that it will now be the end of October before Counsel opinions will be at hand.

ITEM 3: Civil Service General Council

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting of the Civil Service General Council held on Wednesday 29th September 2021. There was a copy of the Agenda from this meeting issued in the executive file. The following items were raised at General Council:

- The establishment of the sub-committee on the Blended

Working Framework

- Update on the application of Labour Court Recommendation CD/18/189, LCR21812 – Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR)

There was a briefing given on the above issues raised at the Civil Service General Council to the NEC at the meeting.

The NEC was given the following briefings under headings 4 – 11 relating to General Matters:

ITEM 4: Covid - 19 Update

Discussions have continued with the management side since our last National Executive Council meeting. On Tuesday 14th September a meeting took place with NICT regarding clinical decisions that had been made which the Union felt were at variance with Government/Public Health guidance. It was agreed to hold a follow up engagement prior to October 22nd. The IPS forwarded a number of documents to the Staff Side on Thursday 30th September which dealt with the following issues:

- An updated unwinding algorithm
- An updated framework document for unwinding in schools
- Staff wearing facial hair
- Prisoners wearing facial hair

On Monday evening 4th October, the IPS forwarded a further two policy documents in respect of the IPSC (Portlaoise & Wheatfield) and new guidelines regarding PPE/COVID measures to be implemented.

As previously stated, the POA are at all times seeking a commonality in approach from IPS with the current relaxation of measures across society.

This methodology will continue as Government announcements takes place and further unwinding of restrictions takes place.

ITEM 5: Review of the 2007 Prison Rules

The NEC was informed that the Union received correspondence on Wednesday 18th August 2021, advising that the Irish Prison Service had opened consultation on a review of the Prison Rules.

The current Prison Rules were published in May 2007, a year after the publication of the then European Prison Rules (2006). In July 2020 the Council of Europe published an updated European Prison Rules and in reviewing the Prison Rules now, the IPS wish to take account of the updated European Prison Rules and also consider changes within the Irish Prison Service, the prison system and also changes that have occurred within the wider criminal justice system over the past 14 years. These include organisational developments in the prison system including security and operational developments; societal and prison demographical changes; technological advancements and changes to processes and procedures.

The IPS invited interested parties who wished to make a submission to do so by Thursday 30th September 2021. This matter was discussed at the last NEC meeting held on Thursday 2nd September 2021 and it was decided as an interested party the Prison Officers Association would make a Submission to the Review of the Prison Rules. There was a Copy of the Submission of the Prison Officers Association as an interested party to the Review of the Prison Rules issued in the executive file.

ITEM 6: IPS Policy for Staff Recognition

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting of the Staff Recognition National Committee held on Wednesday 29th September 2021. The Committee dealt with a number of applications for Merit Awards, some of which had to be returned for further information and will have to be re-examined by the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

The NEC was briefed on the outcome of the aforementioned meeting of the Staff Recognition National Committee. The next meeting of the Staff Recognition National Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 2nd November 2021.

ITEM 7: National Suicide and Harm Prevention Steering Group

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting of the National Suicide and Harm Prevention Steering Group held on Wednesday 29th September 2021. There were a number of issues discussed at this meeting including Novel Psychoactive Substances and how they are being disguised in the community and continuing to be difficult to identify. It was outlined how steps are required to tackle the influx of drugs by post which involves the photographing of mail coming into the Prison system. The Samaritans listener scheme have piloted training listeners on zoom in Cloverhill Prison. There was also an undertaking that the IPS College will audit the requirement for Mental Health training for staff nationwide.

ITEM 8: Uniform

The NEC was informed that the Union recently received correspondence from the IPS giving an update

on the back-order position at present on items for IPS Uniform. The problems caused in the global supply chain as a result of the Global Pandemic has resulted in difficulties and delays regarding the supply of the following items of uniform:

- ASICS Trainers
- Nurses Knitwear
- Uniform Caps
- Waterproof Jackets
- Canine Officers – Footwear

The aforementioned correspondence was issued in the executive file outlining the difficulties and delays regarding the supply of the above items of uniform.

ITEM 9: Retirement Function

Due to the cancellation of last year's retirement function for members that retired during 2020, the NEC has decided that the Union would hold two retirement functions in late 2021. The first retirement function will be held on Tuesday 16th November 2021, to cater for members that retired in 2020.

The retirement function will be held in the Westin Hotel, College Green, Westmoreland Street, Dublin 2, the invitations to the first of this year's retirement functions will issue shortly.

ITEM 10: Finance

There were a number of financial issues discussed and dealt with by the NEC at the meeting including matters relating to the retirement functions 2021, matters relating to Annual Delegate Conference 2022 and matters relating to the reinvestment of investments that have recently matured.

ITEM 11: AOB

Cloverhill: Raised the position in relation to the holding of Branch meetings arising from the unwinding of Covid restrictions.

The NEC decided to re-visit this issue after Monday 22nd October 2021 when the NEC would be in a better position to address this matter taking into consideration the Public Health advice that will then be in place.

Mountjoy: Raised the issue of Covid leave and Officers being asked to take their own sick leave when they are symptom free.

It was explained to the NEC that the Union disagrees with the position that IPS is adopting regarding this issue and that this matter would be raised at a forthcoming Workplace Relations Commission engagement to deal with issues relating to Covid payments.

The above is a summary of the issues raised at this National Executive Council Meeting. Please contact the National Executive Council Member who attended this meeting for clarification on any of these issues.

If you wish to receive this bulletin by email please email admin@poa.ie

RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING

RECRUIT PRISON OFFICER CLASS 01/21

On 9th April 2021, the Recruit Prison Officers Class 01/2021 completed their training in the Irish Prison Service College. After 12 weeks of training these men and women have been posted to their assigned prisons for further training and development. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish these new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all. Unfortunately this year there was no official Graduation or Class photo due to the restrictions imposed on us by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Please see in the following pages individual photos.

2021



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING



INFORMATION BULLETIN

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 16th AND WEDNESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2021

There were thirteen main headings on the Agenda for the NEC meeting held on Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th November 2021. ITEMS 1 – 5 related generally to Pay and Allowances issues. ITEMS 6 – 14 related to general matters that are regularly dealt with by the POA.

Please see below a summary regarding the main headings that were dealt with on the Agenda of this NEC meeting.

The NEC was given the following briefings under headings 1 – 5 relating to Pay & Allowances issues:

PAY & ALLOWANCES

ITEM 1: Pay

The first pay adjustment related to the new public service agreement – Building Momentum a general round increase worth 1% of gross pay or €00 a year, whichever is the greater, was due with effect from Friday 1st October 2021.

The Union received a copy of the revised Pay rates from the Irish Prison Service on the morning of Tuesday 16th November 2021. The NEC was informed that there will be copies of the revised Pay rates ready for issue at the December NEC Meeting.

Christmas Pay Arrangements: The Irish Prison Service confirmed on Tuesday 16th November 2021 that Annual Premium Payments would be contained in the Pay run scheduled for Thursday 2nd December 2021. This will relate to annual leave up to and including the week ending Friday 19th November 2021.

They also issued instructions regarding the treatment of the rescheduled rest day for staff whose

rest day falls on Christmas Day and they clearly outlined the pay-file deadlines that are to be followed over the Christmas period. The instructions relating to the Christmas Pay Arrangements were circulated from POA Headquarters to all Branch Secretaries on Wednesday 17th November 2021 and there was a copy of the arrangements to apply to attendance over the Christmas period 2021 and the New Year issued in the executive file.

Transformation: There were nine meetings/engagements held with the Irish Prison Service, since the last NEC meeting, which was held on Tuesday 5th October 2021, relating to the on-going Transformation Process provided for under the Public Service Pay Agreements.

The following items were among those included on the agenda for these meetings/engagements:

Castlereagh: The crisis in the nursing area is having an impact on the service delivery in the Prison. A number of IR issues regarding National Monitoring and Review and the Regime Management Plan have arisen again at Castlereagh Prison resulting in a number of issues being forwarded to the National Monitoring and Review Committee.

IPS College: There is a shortfall of tutors at IPS College, despite the recent tutor competition. As a result there has been support for the college by way of a temporary increase in AH bands. In addition a Joint task review of the college is ongoing.

The position regarding staff attending for physical training courses is as follows *“that where training requires a tracksuit, Officers can attend*

in tracksuit and do not require Officer’s to attend in uniform first”.

Incentivised Regime Policy: The implementation of the Incentivised Regime Policy is ongoing. A number of issues are being explored in a bid to streamline the inputting comments by staff on the Incentivised Regime forms etc, and how it can be made more user friendly.

Prison Operations: The Prison Officer’s Association have sought that the Operations directorate provide clarity regarding a number of issues surrounding visits including:

- The use and type of video booths.
- Security issues with video visits.
- The standardisation of visits nationwide.
- Use of video link for courts and legal visits.

PSEC: There are a number of issues outstanding at PSEC Dublin and a date has been agreed for a hearing at the Workplace Relations Commission.

Transfers: The IPS have issued correspondence outlining the requirement for a gender specific transfer in the OSG.

Rosters: The issue regarding staff seeking “rosters changes” and the impact on their work area and or the current agreements was outlined as follows.

When staff seek an alternative roster, the following process is in place:

- Consultation with the Branch Committee and the staff affected.
- A joint task review takes place.
- The IPS propose a roster based on requirements identified during the task review.

Staff must be aware that when a roster change is requested by the staff side, the official side may produce a roster that meets the needs of the Prison and may not necessarily meet the staff needs. The principles of rosters that is max time on max time off will be the main tenet of the roster from a staff side perspective. The shortening of the prison day is not a principle for rosters.

The NEC was briefed regarding the aforementioned nine meetings and informed of the forthcoming schedule of meetings.

ITEM 2: Nursing Issues

There was a virtual hearing held on Thursday 13th May 2021, by the Chairperson of the National Monitoring and Review Committee in relation to the payment of the 8% Operational Allowance to Prison Nurses. It was reported at previous NEC meetings that the Chairperson found that as Prison Nurses have a contractual responsibility to operate the AH system, they have a legitimate expectation to be paid the Operational Allowance. However, the Chairperson outlined that management are not in a position to pay the allowance to Prison Nurses in the absence of sanction from DPER. He therefore recommended that the IPS should immediately engage with DPER so as to put in place the necessary sanction for the payment of this allowance to Prison Nurses. This process should be completed within a four-week time frame from the date of this Chairpersons decision.

The Union is continuing to engage on this issue with the IPS in order to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion for the members concerned. There is an engagement scheduled to take place at the Workplace Relations Commission on Wednesday 15th December 2021, on this issue and the NEC will be kept updated on all developments regarding this matter.

ITEM 3: Pensions

The NEC was informed that there was a virtual meeting of the Superannuation sub-committee of General Council held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021. There was a copy of the Agenda from this sub-committee meeting issued in the executive file and there was a briefing given to the meeting on the issues raised by the Staff Side at the Superannuation sub-committee of General Council.

On Monday 8th November 2021, the Union received correspondence from our legal advisors updating us that they had been informed by Counsel that it is anticipated that Counsel Opinions associated with the pension issues sought by the Prison Officers Association will be available in the next couple of weeks.

ITEM 4: Justice Departmental Council matters

The Claim relating to the Dog Handlers Allowance Midlands/Portlaoise Complex has now been concluded. Dog handlers at the Complex now received 50% of the Environmental Allowance. The matters raised at the Justice Departmental Council relating to monies owing, prior to 1st November 2019, has also now been resolved. This issue was to be assessed on a case-by-case basis of the relevant staff members. The IPS informed the Union that the instruction to pay the back monies owed was issued.

The Claim for the payment of attendance allowances to Staff working in the Irish Prison Service who have had to self-isolate because of showing the symptoms for Coronavirus or having had to do so due to the contact tracing procedures is ongoing.

There is an engagement scheduled at the Workplace Relations Commission for Wednesday 15th December 2021 regarding the areas of this Claim where the parties remain in disagreement.

ITEM 5: Civil Service General Council

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting of the Civil Service General Council held on Wednesday 3rd November 2021. This was a rescheduled meeting as the General Council meeting due to take place on Wednesday 27th October 2021, was cancelled due to the ICTU Biennial Conference taking place in Belfast. The following items were raised at General Council:

- Update on blended working sub – committee
- Pension regrossing issue raised at General Council July 2020
- Transition to the WRC
- Appointment of Civil Service Adjudicator
- Travel and Subsistence Issues
- AOB (Annual Travel Pass)

There was a briefing given on the above issues raised at the Civil Service General Council to the NEC. *The NEC was given the following briefings under headings 6 – 14 relating to General Matters:*

ITEM 6: Covid - 19 Update

In line with the increased numbers of Coronavirus cases in the community, there are a number of outbreaks ongoing in the Prison Service across three sites, Cloverhill, Midlands, and Mountjoy Prisons. Individual cases are also being managed at other locations. Swabbing of all staff at Coverhill and the Midlands Prison has recently concluded. Mountjoy and Dochas Centre staff swabbing will take place at Croke Park on Thursday and Friday of this week. OCT meetings take place on a daily basis and the POA are represented at all such briefings. Significant dialogue between the IPS Infection Control Team and HSE Public Health influences all decisions made, and the approach may vary slightly from site to site depending on a number of factors for example vaccination levels. Further engagement with the IPS will now take place in light of

updated decisions by Government and advice from Public Health.

ITEM 7: Meeting with the Director General

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting held with the Director General of the Irish Prison Service on Monday 18th October 2021, at the Irish Prison Service Headquarters Longford. The Union raised a number of issues with the Director General including matters relating to Escort Guidelines, the Prisoner progression plan and Alleged Industrial Relations Breaches at Castlerea Prison.

Following on from this meeting the IPS informed the Union that the Operations Directorate will issue clarification in respect of guidance in assessing the resource requirement for escorts from Chief Officers. In addition, a clear procedure will issue in respect of two person escorts in respect of taking breaks and the use of handcuffs. These clarifications will issue within the next three weeks. The IPS outlined that they have agreed to finalise a consultation document for circulation on a proposed prisoner progression plan for discussion with stakeholders in early December.

The IPS have also given a commitment to meet with the Governor of Castlerea in the next week and will revert further on foot of any disagreement at that time.

ITEM 8: Promotion Competitions

The NEC was informed that the Union received correspondence from the Irish Prison Service on Monday 11th October 2021 informing us that Prison Management had received confirmation from DPER in relation to same grade applications and Promotions.

For promotion competitions DPER include the line about the maximum point being the cut off point for eligibility for promotion competitions.

They have further stated that "For general civil service grade, a PO

can't apply for an AP competition or another PO competition and this would apply to other grades including Prison grades".

Based on the above information the IPS have outlined that they are going to proceed on the basis that anyone who applies for any role within the IPS where the highest point on the payscale is the same or lower for that which they are applying, they will be removed from the competition on the grounds as outlined above. This matter was discussed at the meeting and it was decided that the Union would consult with the other Civil Service Unions at the Civil Service Staff Panel on this issue and then seek to engage further with the Irish Prison Service.

ITEM 9: IPS Policy for Staff Recognition

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting of the Staff Recognition National Committee held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021. The Committee dealt with a number of applications for Merit Awards, some of which had previously been submitted and were to be re-examined. It was again necessary for a number of forms to be returned to their place of origin regarding recommendations from local committees and management.

The Committee made decisions on a number of other applications which have now been forwarded on to the Director General for ratification.

ITEM 10: Branch Committee Elections 2022

All local Branch Committees of the Prison Officers Association will be obliged to run elections for all local Branch Committee positions for the forthcoming three-year term in accordance with Rule 64. Correspondence will be issued to all Branch Secretaries by the General Secretary shortly regarding this matter. This issue was discussed by the NEC due to the ongoing restrictions related to the holding of Branch meetings.

ITEM 11: IPRT

The NEC was informed that there was a meeting held with the Executive Director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust on Thursday 11th November 2021 at the IPRT Head Office. The issues discussed were the research carried out in respect of the experience of Foreign Nationals in Irish Prisons and the Prisoner complaints procedures.

ITEM 12: Finance

There were a number of financial matters dealt with at the meeting including matters relating to the retirement function, members presentations and staff promotions.

ITEM 13: Annual Retirement Function

The Annual Retirement function for members that retired during 2020 was held at 17.00hrs at the Westin Hotel, College Green, Dublin 2. This was due to the fact that the Union could not hold this event in December 2020 due to the Public Health Restrictions in place at that time. All guests were honoured with a token of appreciation from the Prison Officers Association for their long and dedicated service. At the retirement function the President and the General Secretary on behalf of the NEC wished all those who retired and had turned up to the event a long, healthy, happy and well-deserved retirement.

ITEM 14: AOB

Mountjoy: Raised matters relating to the lack of pre – retirement courses being offered to staff by the Irish Prison Service.

The above is a summary of the issues raised at this National Executive Council Meeting. Please contact the National Executive Council Member who attended this meeting for clarification on any of these issues.

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RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING

RECRUIT PRISON OFFICER CLASS 02/21

On 28th May 2021 the Recruit Prison Officers Class 02/2021 completed their training in the Irish Prison Service College. After 12 weeks of training these men and women have been posted to their assigned prisons for further training and development. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish these new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all. Unfortunately this year there was no official Graduation or Class photo due to the restrictions imposed on us by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Please see in the following pages individual photos.

2021



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING

RECRUIT PRISON OFFICER CLASS 03/21

On 9th July 2021 the Recruit Prison Officers Class 03/2021 completed their training in the Irish Prison Service College. After 12 weeks of training these men and women have been posted to their assigned prisons for further training and development. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish these new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all. Unfortunately this year there was no official Graduation or Class photo due to the restrictions imposed on us by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Please see in the following pages individual photos.

2021



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING



RPO CLASS COMPLETE TRAINING

RECRUIT PRISON OFFICER CLASS 04/21

On Friday 3rd September 2021 the Recruit Prison Officers Class 04/2021 completed their training in the Irish Prison Service College. After 12 weeks of training these men and women have been posted to their assigned prisons for further training and development. The Prison Officers Association would like to take this opportunity to wish these new members to the Prison Service well in their future careers. Best of luck to one and all. Unfortunately this year there was no official Graduation or Class photo due to the restrictions imposed on us by the global Covid-19 pandemic. Please see in the following pages individual photos.

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RUSTY RAMBLERS



Our hike in July was on the Waterford/Tipperary border "The Coumshingaun Loop". Eight (8) Rusties enjoyed the wonderful scenic views of Coumshingaun and Danny trying to get his Ned through the narrow rock face. Just something to note in relation to Coumshingaun in August alone this year there were up to four (4) rescues off the mountain by South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA) due mainly to people not prepared for hiking in Irish weather.

August turned out to be a difficult month due to the localised Covid-19 lockdown of Laois, Offaly and Kildare, our wild camp in Mayo was postponed. We ended up in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Co Laois hiking 17kms from the Cut to Mockinew Carpark with twelve (12) Rusties and sunny weather. Our wild camp finally took place on Monday the 31st of August just after the lockdown in Laois was lifted. We went along with Gerry's choice of venue Carey's castle in Clonmel.

A small group of six (6) Rusties camped out for the night, weather was perfect again, thank god.

In September while out hiking in the Slieve bloom mountains on my own I came across retired Poa members Paddy and Val (see picture), they were in great form and retirement is really suiting them.

Our big international trip this year was Andorra. However due to the Covid-19 pandemic our trip was cancelled. Instead 10 Rusties headed to Newcastle in Northern Ireland for 3 days, hiking up Slieve Donard on Wednesday and Slieve Binnian on Thursday.



RUSTY RAMBLERS



Naturally when the hiking was over on Thursday, we all took refuge in Quinn's Pub in Newcastle for Food and a few beverages, the night before in O'Hare's Pub we all availed of the British government's generous offer of half price grub an incentive to get people out eating.

Paudie in his wisdom took the British government up on the offer on Thursday night with a big juicy steak not realising the offer was only available Monday to Wednesday.

Regards Fergus Bracken.



Rusties Visit Sligo/Donegal



Our trip this year in September took the Rusties to Sligo/Donegal. We arrived on the Monday morning in Sligo to hike Benbulbin with 13 Rusties, later that day we made our way to Letterkenny for two nights in the Radisson Blu hotel.

On Tuesday we took the journey from Letterkenny to Mount Errigal (30 mins),

We were blessed with the weather with stunning views and beautiful scenery, would recommend if anyone gets a chance well worth the hike on a clear day.

We finally got around to Mountain skills courses for most of our members during September, October and November with special thanks

to Irish prison service sports and leisure association for their sponsored contribution. And our work colleague Fergal Hill (Qualified mountain leader with Mountaineering Ireland) for his patience in teaching the Rusties.

The club would recommend Fergal to any other hiking groups in the Irish prison service, great knowledge of navigation and



RUSTY RAMBLERS



safety in the mountains and fully certified with Mountaineering Ireland.

Lastly I have to mention Danny Murray and his Offaly flag on each mountain top celebrating the 2021 under 20's all Ireland winners, god help us if Offaly ever win a senior title , especially as his drinking buddy Shane Lowry sponsors them .

Happy Christmas and hiking new year to all

Fergus Bracken, Secretary



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OWEN (THE RAKE) MCDONALD

Midlands Prison

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing and untimely death of our Colleague the Late Owen [The Rake] McDonald.

The Rake worked with us here in the Midlands Prison for the past twenty years.

After many years trying to find his handy one he, eventually, found it when he was given the position of Officer i/c Tuck Shop.

With this role came the great responsibility of making sure that officers had plenty of biscuits and tea bags for their journeys back to the Landings. He could never pass the Main Gate or the Search Area without giving away some of the damaged stock.

Through his work role Rake was in the position to meet many a Warden going about their daily business.

Conversations took place, The Rake had heard them all, good or bad and a packet of damaged biscuits cured them all.

The Rake couldn't have a conversation without mentioning his kids who he adored. How Conor played at the weekend with his beloved TN.S United or how Ailbhe was getting her ready for the driving test. He talked about them non-stop.

Quotes The Rake had:

"Well Horny"

"Well Townie"

"Did I ever tell you about my Championship Medal I won in 92."



The Rake was a unique and rare person - you won't find too many like him again. Witty, funny, and always had time to listen to everyone. He will be best remembered for those attributes.

With the untimely passing of our Friend and Colleague it has left a massive void with the Staff here in the Midlands. The Rake touched many through his witty comments and funny sense of humour.

As the saying goes

"Gone but not Forgotten"

Good night Friend

May you Have Wonderful Dreams

Of Beautiful Things

Whilst wrapped in your

Guardian Angels Wings.

Thank you for the photo and words to Crocky Maher, Midlands.



CASTLEREA BRANCH NEWS

In April 2021 Michael Bohan Castlerea Prison took on the challenge of running 250km during the month of April 2021. The motivation for Michael to complete such a challenge was in memory of a dear friend Brendan Meehan. In May 2020 the Bohan family lost their dear friend in heart-breaking circumstances which many still find very hard to come to terms with, no more so than his loving family and wife to be, Shauna. Whether you knew Brendan or not many of you will recall the tragic week of his passing. Whether it was on the paper, social media, or radio. His beaming smile would trigger happy memories and draw a tear for so many. Some of you may have lost loved ones in similar circumstances or may know families that have. Mick was supported by his colleagues in Castlerea Prison who accompanied him on all his runs. The money that



CASTLEREA BRANCH NEWS

Michael raised were donated to CRY Ireland.

Cry (Cardiac Risk in the Young) Ireland is a registered charity that provides free counselling and support for families affected by sudden unexplained death or cardiac conditions. CRY provides evaluation and treatment for at risk individuals and families. The Centre opened in November 2008 and currently operates from Tallaght Hospital. Treatment and prevention of complications is possible in most people once cardiovascular disease is identified. Early identification can significantly reduce disease progression, although, generally, complete cure is not possible. Most treatments involve medication and lifestyle changes, although operations may be needed for advanced heart disease.



CASTLEREA BRANCH NEWS



CLOVERHILL BRANCH NEWS

If this pandemic has shown us anything it is that Prison Officers have the most scrutinized job in the country. We have the Inspector of Prisons, Visiting Committees, Gardai, and the IPS among others looking over our shoulder ready to point the finger of blame at systemic failings. As covid continues to rage throughout the world, we have to deal the effects of that in our working environment.

As things change rapidly and covid dictates our regimes our members continue to deal with things professionally diligently and effectively. It was very disappointing to learn that the Irish Prison Service could not put forward a nomination for the staff

of the Prison Service to the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards 2021, for the trojan work put in by each and every staff member to keep the effects of coronavirus out of the Countries Prisons and that a project such as *Beyond Walls* supporting prisoners, prisoners' families and service providers during Covid -19 was submitted.

The way this award system is set up does not allow for nominations such as the excellent work carried out by our members during the pandemic, but I do know this issue has been raised by the POA representatives on the Staff Recognition National Committee, part of the IPS Policy for Staff

Recognition and hopefully as a result our members will get the recognition they deserve. Let this be a reminder that the POA will always act in the best interest of the members because one thing is for certain nobody else will. On behalf of the branch, I would like to wish all our members a happy Christmas, in whatever form that may be. Also, our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones in the past year. I wish to thank the national officers, the ladies in Merrion square and all those in Cloverhill who have assisted the branch throughout the year. Your help is always appreciated.

Neil Brady
Branch Secretary, POA

Christmas Greetings from the Midlands

That year has flown by! On behalf of the Midlands Branch I would like to wish all our members and colleagues a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. Unfortunately, the other C word is still with us. It is with great disappointment the dinner dance was cancelled along with many others throughout the country. It is particularly disappointing for all those on the social club committee who I know put in such an effort in organising everything.

It is good to see the Rusty Ramblers managing to get out and about and many thanks as always for the article and pictures that give a flavour of the effort and fun involved.

This time of the year is a difficult one for those that have lost friends and loved ones. Our deepest sympathies to all. We particularly remember Owen McDonald. I will leave the tribute to a beloved Rake for elsewhere in this magazine but it has to be said that the response of staff in pulling together and the symbol of this in the lining on the Dublin Road would bring a lump to any throat. To all our colleagues nationwide who called and assisted by manning the prison, and all those in management, Chaplin's and SSO's, you have our heartfelt gratitude.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our new transfers, including those

now arriving to the NVRU. Drop into the office or call to say hello or ask a question. Congratulations to all those members who have been successful in promotion competitions.

It's Branch election time again. I would encourage anyone with an interest to put themselves forward. It was very welcome to see the response at our last elections and it's a great opportunity for anyone to contribute and bring new ideas.

Nollaig Shona Daoibh

Paul Tucker
Midlands POA Chairperson

WHEATFIELD BRANCH NEWS

On behalf of the Wheatfield Branch committee, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all the members of the POA in Wheatfield Prison a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, for you and your families. I would like to extend sympathy to the relatives of our colleagues who have passed away this year as Christmas is a time, we miss them most.

On behalf of the Local Branch, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the new members and those who transferred into

Wheatfield. We bid a fond farewell to those who have left Wheatfield to pastures greener on transfer and promotion. To the staff that have retired, we hope you have a long and healthy retirement

We have made great strides forward this year and we, the local branch, will continue to work hard for all our members in 2022. Your commitment, resilience and professionalism has been second to none.

As the Local Branch Elections approach, I would also like to take

this opportunity to appeal to all members of the POA in Wheatfield to become active, get involved and positively participate in our union. On behalf of the Wheatfield POA Branch Committee, thank you for your continued support and loyalty to the POA.

'In union lies strength!'

Peter Redmond
Wheatfield POA Chairperson

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Enhanced Budget Account

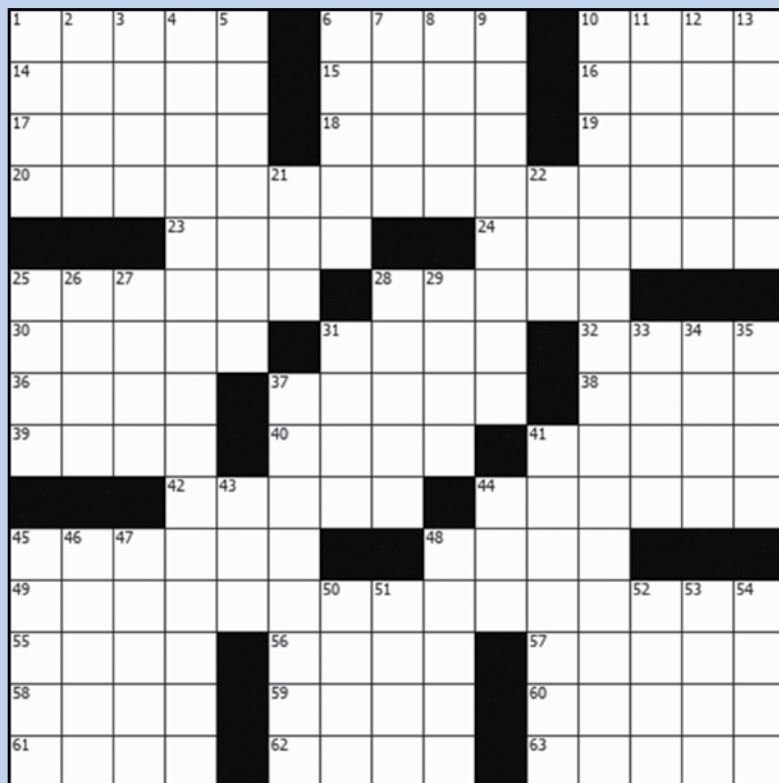
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BRAIN EXERCISES

CROSSWORD



Please send completed
Crossword Entries by
Friday 25th February
2022 to
The Editor,
Prison Officer Magazine,
18, Merrion Square,
Dublin 2.
5 prizes of €25 will be
awarded to winning
entries.

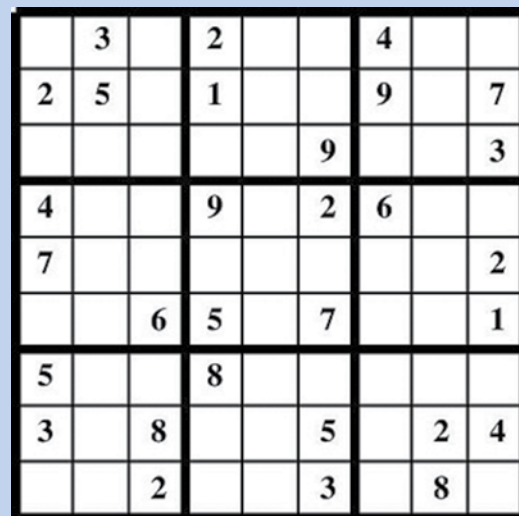
ACROSS

1. Basic unit of capacitance
6. Battle mettle
11. Dr. Seuss character
14. TV studio light
15. City on the Penobscot
16. Nod or mod attachment
17. Boys with badges
19. Org. in "Patriot Games"
20. "Rich Man, Poor Man" author
21. Film editor's units
23. Sunblock
27. Polish remover
29. Removed from memory
30. Word with Vallarta or Rico
31. Biblical king
32. Bernstein and Lewis
33. Twist-off, e.g.
36. Atlas statistic
37. Flower component
38. Toast-topper, sometimes
39. Novelist Deighton
40. Military assistants
41. Nose-offending stimuli
42. He may swing from the heels
44. Mint product
45. Got going
47. Like eggs prepped for scrambling, perhaps
48. Crop up
49. Equine check
50. Feathers partner
51. Rat
58. Opening-day pitcher
59. Gabardine or serge e.g.
60. "The Barber of Seville," e.g.
61. "The Simpsons" neighbor, Flanders
62. They're rung up
63. Drew, of fiction

DOWN

1. Darius, to Alexander
2. Santa ___ winds
3. Classless newspaper
4. Suffer ill health
5. Adorned
6. Outspoken
7. "... pretty maids all in ___"
8. Bodybuilder Ferrigno
9. Can. province (Abbr.)
10. Personnel lists
11. Noisy timekeeper
12. Immigrant
13. Kid a kid
18. Equipped with footwear
22. Telecom co.
23. Piano feature
24. "What ___ mood I'm in ..."
25. Black-tressed
26. It's east of the Urals
27. Sainly radiances
28. Spreadsheet unit
30. Word with news or tissue
32. Gave up, as land
34. Condor's nest
35. Did some modeling
37. Locale
38. Keats' creations
40. Bears witness
41. Your view or mine
43. April 15 addressee
44. Transport commercially
45. One leading to temptation?
46. Kind of element
47. Water holes
49. Proper function
52. One-time Delta competitor
53. Black gold
54. 3.75, e.g.
55. Poe's evening
56. Fabled sea monster
57. Thumbs down

SUDOKU



Please send completed Sudoku Entries by

Friday 25th February 2022 to

The Editor

Prison Officer Magazine,

18, Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

5 prizes of €25 will be awarded to the winning entries.

— WINTER WINNERS —

CROSSWORD WINNERS

Maria Birney	Dochas	€25
Brian Martin	Cork	€25
Ann Whitty	Portlaoise	€25
Oliver O Connor	Limerick	€25
John Duffy	Portlaoise	€25

SUDOKU WINNERS

Liam Donnelly	Wheatfield	€25
Linda Rogan	Castlereagh	€25
Anthony Noonan	Cork	€25
Liam Sweeney	Cork	€25
Mick Fitzgerald	Mountjoy	€25

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