

# **PRISON DIALOGUE LIMITED**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

### **YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2012**

The Trustees, who are also Directors for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 May 2012.

#### **DIRECTORS DURING THE YEAR**

Christopher J Marks, Jennifer Garrett and Neil Jones served as directors for the entire year. However, Neil Jones expressed a desire not to continue as a Trustee (he formally resigned as a Trustee following the end of the year under review on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012, and was replaced by Mark Seneschall).

The Trustees and management team talked monthly by telephone and met twice during the year, for the Annual General Meeting and review (held 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011), and at a half-year review meeting. Members were invited to the meetings.

The Trustees have taken account of the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit when reviewing the principal activities.

#### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Prison Dialogue Limited is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1995 and a registered charity, registered on 19 March 1996. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 each.

#### **PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES AND REVIEW OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS**

Building on the work undertaken in the previous year, the focus of Prison Dialogue's activity during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012 was to challenge and develop the thinking about how fully to realise the charity's purpose 'to impact the Criminal Justice System and inspire and support all involved to work dialogically to the benefit of their establishment, community and/or country'.

In keeping with this, the Management and Trustee group met and talked regularly with a view to developing a clearer strategy for the future of the charity. This served to divert Prison Dialogue's resources away from direct dialogue intervention work to concentrate on impacting a larger audience. As a result, there was less emphasis during the year on the provision of on the ground services and support to elements of the Criminal Justice System, although a number of such activities were undertaken indirectly through the involvement of some of the charity's member organisations and participants (see below).

This has led to emergence of a strategic framework for the charity organised around three key components – a 'Knowledge Hub', a 'Practice Hub', and a 'Convening Key Conversations Hub'.

THE KNOWLEDGE HUB has a vision to provide easy access to a 'Corpus of Knowledge' about dialogue in general and Prison Dialogue in particular, to create a reference site for practitioners, and to encourage the broader use of dialogue in the Criminal Justice System and beyond.

THE PRACTICE HUB has a vision to provide a generative space for people to build skill and capacity in dialogue for themselves, their establishments and their communities in service of public safety.

THE CONVENING KEY CONVERSATIONS HUB has a vision to convene conversations that address fragmentation in the Criminal Justice System and how it impacts the Offender's journey, re-entry, re-settlement and public safety.

The conclusion is that the primary audience for Prison Dialogue's efforts in these areas should be the people who are in charge of prison establishments across the world, namely all prison Governors, Directors, Wardens and Superintendents, and then more broadly those who are in a position to make or influence policy, and therefore can promote the wider use of dialogue in prisons and the wider Criminal Justice System.

Linked to this, it is anticipated that in future the delivery of actual dialogic interventions will continue to be undertaken primarily by other organisations and participants (such as the Charity's strategic partner and corporate member, Dialogue Associates) rather than directly by Prison Dialogue. This work is self-funding but feeds experience and know-how into the Prison Dialogue Knowledge Hub.

Efforts to implement this new strategy commenced during the year. A key plank of this is the redesign of the Prison Dialogue website, which is seen as a means of underpinning all three hubs. In relation to the Knowledge Hub, it is intended that this will provide a repository for the 'corpus of knowledge' developed and assembled by the Charity since 1995, and make this available in an easily accessible way to the target audience and all other interested parties. This will also support the Practice Hub, by providing guidance in the various elements and skills involved in a successful dialogue, that can be accessed by practitioners, and the Convening Key Conversations Hub, by serving as something of a 'shop window' for, and demonstrating the credibility of, the activities of the Charity for potential participants.

During the year, the Charity commenced discussions with website designers regarding development of the new website. Work also took place to develop material for use on the website, including written case studies and video recordings.

Practical dialogic activity in the Criminal Justice System continued to be undertaken by Prison Dialogue partners and members, notably Dialogue Associates.

Dialogue Associates activities in the UK were focused principally on G4S. These involved three G4S prisons in particular, Oakwood, Birmingham and Parc. At the newly opened Oakwood prison, Dialogue Associates are introducing dialogue in 'Learning Circles' which will be attended by every prisoner (of which there will be approximately 1600 when the prison is full) and every residential prison custody officer. Each Learning Circle will be attended by six prisoners with one or two officers in attendance. A significant development is that these will form part of the core prison routine rather than being a voluntary activity, and will be used as the means to undertake the mandatory Personal Officer work, which often proves problematic to deliver in other prisons. As such, attendance will be monitored and the meetings will be documented.

At Birmingham prison, Dialogue Associates were actively involved in the transfer of the prison from the public sector to private sector operation under G4S, with an emphasis on the human dynamics and cultural aspects of the transition. In particular, Dialogue Associates orchestrated a meeting between G4S and the national and local Birmingham leadership of the Prison Officers Association, which was pivotal in avoiding the risk of industrial action which the union had threatened to take in the event of the privatisation of any public sector prison. Dialogue Associates also led a series of activities aimed at building connections between prison staff and G4S, and helping staff come to terms with the transition; worked with prisoners to ensure they did not have unrealistic expectations of the immediate impact of the transfer; and worked with G4S management to ensure good alignment between different participants and functions involved in the transition. These activities contributed significantly to the absence of any serious incidents at the prison up to and during the

transfer to G4S which took place on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011. Subsequently Dialogue Associates have maintained an involvement at the prison, with an emphasis on providing support to management in progressing the longer term transformation of the prison against the backdrop of a complex set of operational and other demands, and a deeply embedded established way of working.

At Parc, the prison continued to extend its programme of Dialogue Groups as a means of providing better engagement between prisoners and staff. This programme was largely self-sustaining, with only occasional support and advice being provided by Dialogue Associates.

Dialogue Associates also commenced work during the year in the US to support the Virginia Department of Corrections (VA DOC) in its efforts to create a 'healing environment' to provide sustained public safety. The VA DOC has committed to improve resettlement by developing evidence-based practices and making wide use of dialogic skills and practices. This is an exciting opportunity, involving 39 prisons and 43 probation centres. In addition, in order to encourage other jurisdictions in the US to take up the use of dialogue, the US National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is researching the initiative, including the training of Dialogue Practitioners who are delivering the Dialogue Skills training course designed by Dialogue Associates.

Finally, Dialogue Associates continued to provide guidance, support and counsel to the 'Making Life Important' sustainable development and crime prevention initiative in Trinidad and Tobago. This is an ambitious joint venture programme between government, business and non-governmental organisations, aimed at reducing the level of gang crime and violence in a highly deprived area. The initiative was launched by the country's Prime Minister in September 2011.

In addition, Prison Dialogue member Terry Morgan (Eagle Consulting) continued to provide support to the ongoing dialogues undertaken at Portland Young Offenders Institution, which form part of the wider Dorset Threshold Dialogue. This programme was originally launched at Dorchester prison in 2004 under the direct auspices of Prison Dialogue, and evolved over the course of a number of years. In 2010 responsibility for managing the programme was transferred from Prison Dialogue to a Governance body consisting of the participant entities (eg prisons, police, probation, housing etc). Unfortunately, however, with the passage of time, many of the original sponsors of the initiative within these organisations have moved on to other roles, and some of the momentum and traction which the initiative had previously gathered has subsequently been lost. Although some other activities like that at Portland continue – for example there continue to be regular dialogues at Dorchester prison - these tend to be somewhat isolated, rather than part of a coherent and integrated effort as previously.

## **STAFFING AND SUPPORT**

The staff team is unchanged with Peter Garrett as Director, Jane Ball Co-ordinator and Catherine Livingston as Office Manager and Company Secretary. Special thanks to Neil Jones for his contribution as a Trustee.

Chris Marks, Trustee  
Jennifer Garrett, Trustee  
Mark Seneschall, Trustee