

PRISON DIALOGUE LIMITED

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2008

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 2008.

DIRECTORS DURING THE YEAR

C J Marks, N Shields and H Pidgeon served as directors for the entire year.

The Trustees continued to maintain contact by telephone, and met twice in person during the year, joined by the management team. The AGM was held on 31st October 2008.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES AND REVIEW OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS (For the year ending October 2008)

Prison Dialogue continues to thrive as an innovative proponent of direct engagement between the many stakeholders in the criminal justice system, through the practice of dialogue. The charity's core asset is its practical skills with dialogue at both a local and systemic level. Rather than aiming to extend capacity by building and managing a large organisation with these skills, the charity's current strategy is to learn how to transfer the basic dialogic skills to others in a sustainable way. This has been the focus of the work during the past year, and it is particularly evident through the Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue.

Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue

During the past year, the Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue (BTD) has been taken from an activity run by Prison Dialogue at a local prison to a fully-fledged intervention in two prisons and the community largely owned by the range of criminal justice agencies active in Bournemouth. This achievement, in large part due to Jane Ball's direct commitment, warrants a fuller description:

The Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue is a local initiative designed to engage those offenders whose domicile is Bournemouth, whether they are in the community or in prison at the time. In particular it targets high repeat offenders who are known by the police and other agencies to be having a major impact on their community by their sustained criminal behaviour. Some are involved in Probation programmes, but others miss most or all interventions because they refuse to participate or have sentences that are shorter than 12 months. The dialogue sessions are held each Tuesday: in HMP Guys Marsh in the morning, HMP Dorchester in the afternoon and in the evening in the community in Boscombe (a suburb of Bournemouth). Mixed groups typically number 6 to 12 prisoners or ex-offenders with 3 to 6 staff (from various agencies, including prison and police officers in uniform) meeting in open dialogue about whatever is of most interest or concern. The sessions are non-didactic, respecting the principle: *'where everybody learns but nobody teaches'*. Reports of every meeting are available the following week on our web site: www.prisondialogue.org.

Although initiated and piloted by Prison Dialogue, it is now a partnership of the local statutory criminal justice agencies with key voluntary agencies. There is a Governance Board (heads of Police, Prisons, Probation, Borough Council and Prison Dialogue) to manage strategy and policy issues, and an Operations Group (line managers from Police, Prisons, Probation, Courts, the Borough Council Safer and Stronger Communities initiative, Drug project, Housing Association and Prison Dialogue) for operational and monitoring activities. Prison Dialogue is currently running a three month training programme for the Facilitation Team (officers from Police, Prison, Borough Council, Housing Association, Drug agencies and Prison Dialogue) who will run the weekly dialogue sessions.

Once the transference of skills is sufficient for the initiative to be self-sustaining (which could take another six months), Prison Dialogue aims to retain a supervisory role in relation to facilitation, and an active role in the Operations Group and on the Governance Board.

Prison Work

Apart from the Threshold Dialogue work in HMP Guys Marsh and HMP Dorchester, Prison Dialogue has been active at HMP Rye Hill coaching governor grades, and carrying out an Incentives and Earned Privileges review and redesign by actively engaging groups of staff and prisoners, primarily on the landings. In addition, Prison Dialogue regularly runs three modules in the prison's training programme for new staff recruits. Innovatively, these modules bring prisoners into the sessions with the recruits, and in one they help role play scenarios including challenging conversations and the management of conflict.

Prison System Work

During the past year Prison Dialogue has had frequent contact with the Dept of Corrections in Massachusetts (USA), and with G4S (the division running 4 prisons and 4 detention centres in the UK) including off-site strategy and executive development sessions with the Senior Management Group.

Funding

The charity's funding has been a mixture of fees and grants. We are particularly grateful to the Tudor Trust and the Mulberry Trust, who have sustained their support of the charity for many years, and can at last begin to see a return on their investment.

Staffing

The small staff team has been comprised of Peter Garrett (Director), Jane Ball (Co-ordinator), Vince Miller (Project Leader), Catherine Livingston (Office Manager) and Sam Dean (Accounting). They are to be congratulated on what they have achieved through sustained hard work in a sector that is notoriously bureaucratic, fragmented, tightly funded and resistant to change.

Web site

The Prison Dialogue web site was redesigned in the summer. We anticipate that a substantial amount of research material along with details of the wide range of dialogic interventions we have designed and led over the past 15 years will be made accessible there during the coming year.

Strategy

For the past year Prison Dialogue has focussed its resources on establishing a sustainable Threshold Dialogue in Bournemouth. The next step is to assess the value of the intervention on crime reduction in the area, and to create a compelling business case for Threshold Dialogue. We are grateful to have two new Trustees joining the charity shortly who have the necessary business expertise to help draft this. The shorter-term intention is to use the business case to help replicate the Threshold Dialogue at another town in England.

The longer-term vision is to create a national network of local Threshold Dialogue Groups - to provide integrated support for the complex work of the resettlement of ex-offenders in their communities. We anticipate that moving down this path will require a larger Prison Dialogue organisation for development and training, and a proportionate increase in funding.

Also, at a systemic level, Prison Dialogue anticipates further executive and strategy development work at a national level with G4S, and at a state level in the USA with the Department of Corrections. The correctional and prison services we encounter have plenty of room for development. When prisons aim to provide a healing environment for prisoners, and there is a clear line of sight for offenders from prison through to accommodation and

employment on release into the community, then real progress will have been made.

People

Nina Shields and Hugh Pidgeon will make way at the AGM this year to enable Neil Jones and Ronnie Forbes to become Trustees. Each of the out-going Trustees has contributed in their own unique way, and my thanks go to both of them for giving their time, interest, thinking and emotions in support of the charity over the past seven years. Vince Miller also moved on at the end of September having spent three years with the early pilot phases of the Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue, and he has left a strong imprint on the way the project has evolved, for which I am grateful. And finally, Catherine Livingston replaces Jane Ball as Company Secretary. Catherine continues in her primary role of Office manager, and Jane continues in her primary role as the charity's Co-ordinator.

Peter Garrett, Director
10th October 2008