

Norfolk Crime Prevention

Guidance Note

Church Security



The design and function of a church or place of worship makes general security more complicated but there is a great deal can be done at modest expense.

Today, criminals have become specialists with genuine and often good knowledge of church furnishings and their value, including art or church antiques. The rise in value and the increase in demand for these items have made church property a desirable target.

The Interior

The following measures can be taken to reduce the risk of theft.

1	Lock your church at night.
2	Store small valuable items in a locked vestry, cupboard or safe when not in use during the week.
3	Altar ware – wooden or base metal substitutes should be displayed and the originals locked away. They can be returned for services and events.
4	Consideration should be given to discreetly chaining antique furniture and other valuables to floors or walls. This may not deter the determined thief but may be sufficient to prevent the opportunist criminal.
5	Wall hangings and paintings should be secured to the walls, ideally using non return security screws. This removes the ability for offenders to just lift off or unscrew items to steal.
6	Valuables should be kept in a safe or a strong room when not being used for a service. Valuables, including communion plates, which are not in regular use should be deposited in the bank or kept off-site.
7	Keys should be kept by a responsible person or in a secure place away from the church.
8	The vestry should be secured by at least two good quality locks, fitted 1/3 rd up and 1/3 rd down on the door, this will increase the resistance of the door to leverage. All locks should conform to BS 3621, or higher, specification. Windows should have robust bars fitted.
9	All property should be photographed and an inventory kept. This needs to be stored in a safe place away from the church. All photographs must have a ruler or 50p coin in the picture to indicate size.
10	The offertory box should ideally be emptied daily. A notice should be displayed on the box indicating this.
11	Vulnerable stained glass windows can be protected externally by black powder coated stainless steel window guards.

The Exterior

Hedges

Hedges can be very effective barriers and difficult to penetrate. Choose something like hawthorn, privet, holly, yew, laurel etc.

Roof and rainwater downpipes pipes

Lead roof coverings are often the main targets for thieves

There are many things you can consider to protect your roof covering including the following:

- Security marking with an approved DNA liquid
- Specialist roof alarm systems
- Replacement of lead with alternative materials
- Lead Security Fixings

If your churches roof lead is marked with a forensic security product i.e. Smartwater or SelectDNA, please ensure that large areas are marked and the appropriate signage is clearly and prominently displayed. All too often a small or faded sign is displayed in an area of the church which a potential offender would not necessarily see.

Historic England (formally known as English Heritage) are now more flexible when it comes to replacing roof coverings and will often approve a faux product that looks and ages the same but has nil scrap value. It's wise to put up a sign to this effect to educate any potential offender but just one touch will show him/her that it is not lead.

Lighting

The use of effective security lighting is very important, particularly for isolated buildings or vulnerable areas. Your Crime Reduction Officer can advise on the type of lighting and where it would be best placed. You could consider the installation of dusk to dawn sensors.

External doors

All doors should be substantially made with strong hinges and effective frames.

Locks should, in all cases, be 5 lever mortice deadlocks that meet BS3621.

Cellars

Cellar entrance doors should be properly secured in a similar fashion to the main entrance door with approved five lever locks or a close coupled padlock on a hasp and staple

Intruder Alarms and CCTV

The presence of an alarm system or CCTV is very often sufficient to deter the would-be criminal even before beginning to plan the crime.

An alarm substantially reduces the time available to the criminal to commit the crime.

Alarm systems or CCTV can be designed to the requirements of individual buildings and surrounding grounds. When sourcing an alarm then use a company that is NSI or SSAIB accredited.

Suspicious Activity

If you witness any suspicious activity in or around the church please report this to the police. For non emergency reports use call 101 if however a crime is in progress please report using 999. For all reports relating to potential lead theft please quote Operation Einstein.

Further Information can be obtained from your Local Crime Reduction Officer or from the following links:

Padlocks	http://securityforbikes.com/products.php?cat=Padlocks http://www.soldsecure.com/search-by-approval-category/
Church watch Manual	http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/index.aspx
Lead Free Flashings and lead alternatives	http://www.icopal.co.uk/Products/Bitumen_Roofing/FormFlash_Lead_Free_Flashings.aspx http://www.ubbink.co.uk/Themes/Ubiflex-non-lead-flashing-(1).aspx http://www.seamlessroofing.co.uk/lead.html
Lead security fixing	http://www.ledlok.co.uk/
Forensic Marking	https://www.selectadna.co.uk/lead-theft?gclid=CJOQ7560hrGCFSGWtAodhDkAiw http://www.smartwater.com/
Specialist roof alarms	http://www.compoundsecurity.co.uk/security-equipment/church-security-systems http://www.perimetersecurityltd.co.uk/church-roof-alarm.html

If you would like a free crime reduction survey of your church to review your security please contact the officer below that covers your area. Either ring 101 and ask for them by name, or email your local officer using the details below.

Norfolk Crime Reduction officers

General – Crimepreventionsurveyrequests@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

North Norfolk & Broadland	Penny Turner	turnerp@norfolk.pnn.police.uk
Norwich	Pc Peter Davison	davisonp@norfolk.pnn.police.uk
Breckland & Kings Lynn	Pc Richard Carlston	carlstonr@norfolk.pnn.police.uk
Great Yarmouth & South Norfolk	Dick Wolsey	wolseyr2@norfolk.pnn.police.uk