

Church thefts

The below are a few tips to help reduce the risk of thefts from churches and other historic locations:

1. Sign up to Heritage Watch and encourage others to do so, its stronger and more effective as a large group. You can find out more and sign up by going to the Essex Police Website and search "Heritage Watch".
2. Where at all possible "cultivate the neighbours" to report any suspicious activity to the police on the non-emergency number of 101 or if a crime is being committed 999. As well as the immediate neighbours in built up areas, in more isolated areas the road or lane leading to it.
3. Provide neighbours with a contact number for a key holder for the property so that can contact you in an emergency or just to check that those "contractors" on site should be there.
4. If you have intended works on site notify your neighbours and parishioners etc.
5. Consider property marking objects within the church and the lead roof, with forensic marking products, (e.g. *Smart Water, Selecta DNA, Trace in Metal etc.*) but remember the same product will not do both. If you have marked property include signage on the product and the building. If you have non-lead alternative on the roof, display signage to that effect.
6. Photograph property within the church including in some photographs of property a scale or "Object ID" card. It is also worth photographing the building and areas of value of the building such as stained-glass windows, architectural stonework etc, also include photographs of detailing within it. If you do suffer an incident of some nature you will need to show the pre-incident condition for insurance and a "Heritage Impact Statement".
7. Consider displaying dummy candlesticks etc. in the church and keeping the real ones locked away in the safe.
8. With paintings and such like use security fittings such as a "Ryman hanger".
9. Consider internal and external CCTV and if you have it use signage to say that you have.
10. As well as the building intruder alarm there are alarms that you can get for the roof and specific items, contact your alarm provider.
11. Vulnerable stained glass windows can be protected by a grille or Perspex sheeting within a frame such as: <https://www.hammerglass.com/>.
12. Use signage within church to put thieves off, such as: *"Welcome to St Mary's, our beautiful church has a wealth of history. **Volunteers regularly attend the church throughout the day** if you have any questions please do not hesitate ask"*.
13. Empty collection boxes regularly and put a sign on them to indicate that this is being done.
14. Ensure tools are put away in a secure room or outbuilding, consider an alarm on it.
15. Do not leave climbing aids insecure outside or against the building.
16. If you use heating oil, consider an alarm on the tank.

For further crime prevention advice see: www.essex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ or www.securedbydesign.com/member-companies/accredited-product-search

Your insurance company may also be able to offer you advice and discounts on certain products.