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CCTV Systems in churches

There is an increased awareness of security in our church buildings and CCTV systems are often seen as being an integral part of the solution. There may be other reasons why such systems can be helpful within your church, such as for letting the organist see what is happening during the service or for visitors to see what is happening in the ringing loft.

In some cases, the need is simply to relay actions from one place to another, such as the organist or bell-ringers. This is done in real time and there is no need for recording the information.

When CCTV cameras are to be used for security, there are other considerations mainly because there will be a need to record the footage.

In all cases, you are installing equipment into a place of worship and it is important that it is as unobtrusive as possible and aesthetically acceptable.

Points to consider: -

- ❖ Consider carefully what the purpose of having the CCTV is – if you are doing this for security purposes, have you considered other issues of security within your building especially if you are planning to have the church open more often.
- ❖ What is the advice from local police?
- ❖ Location of cameras for areas you need to cover. Does this include your churchyard?
- ❖ How will they be installed?
- ❖ Who is responsible for management of the system – changing discs, labelling recordings etc? Where will the stored information be kept?
- ❖ Who is the responsible person who would deal with compliance and any requests for information or complaints?
- ❖ Will recording be of suitable quality to be of any use if needed for evidence in court case?
- ❖ Will the equipment become a target for vandalism?
- ❖ What are the views of the community about use of cameras in church and for those legitimately using the building?
- ❖ Do you need to take steps to avoid certain areas such as places for private prayer or turn the system off during services/events?
- ❖ For how long will any recorded information be stored?
- ❖ Who will be using the building when the cameras are on? Does this raise safeguarding issues that need to be resolved? If necessary, have a conversation with the Parochial Safeguarding Officer or the Safeguarding Team and the Diocese.

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Advisory Committees for the Care of Churches in the Diocese of Leicester

It is important to ensure that you have sufficient security for any wireless CCTV system to protect it from unauthorised access. Wireless has a lot of appeal because of the ease of installation, but can be easy to hack.

You should make sure that the PCC has clear rules, policies and procedures for the use of the system and there should be a periodical review to consider these and the need for the system. It is also good practice that the PCC should ensure the reliability of any persons having access to the images on the system. A discrete notice making people aware of the existence of CCTV recording equipment must be installed, with details of the person to contact in case of queries.

You should be aware that there is guidance issued by the Secretary of State – Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, issued under Section 30 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Although churches are not specifically covered by this Act, anyone in control of the cameras and images recorded would be a ‘data controller’ for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018. Guidance issued under this Act requires data to be collected fairly and lawfully, for specified purposes and to be retained for no longer than necessary to achieve the purpose for which it was collected. You have to consider specifically why you wish to retain the images and justify the period of time, such as four weeks to be able to review images where damage or theft in the church / churchyard that may not come to light immediately.

GDPR

With the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018, a PCC must register with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) if CCTV is installed. Registration with the ICO can be done online and the cost is £35 annually. The ICO can also be contacted for free for advice. To register click here. <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/register/>

Permission to make the installation

The Diocesan Chancellor has issued an Additional Matters Order (AMO) that allows the Archdeacon to deal with these installations under List B. Application should be made by the Online Faculty System using the category Additional Diocesan Matter under List B. The new List B, effective from 1 April 2020, has a category for such installations.

The information that you should prepare for this application includes: -

- ❖ Statement explaining why the PCC wishes to install CCTV and what alternative options have been explored.
- ❖ PCC Minute agreeing to the installation
- ❖ Estimate from the proposed installer
- ❖ Plan of the church showing where fittings and equipment are to be installed, wiring routes and where any alteration needs to be made to the fabric. For wiring, details of the colour, method of fixing and type of cable should be provided.
- ❖ Specification giving full details of the equipment and how it is to be installed.
- ❖ Catalogue illustrations of proposed cameras, monitors or other equipment, with details of size and colour.
- ❖ Details of recording equipment – location, technical details and who will have access
- ❖ Photographs of the area of the church where the equipment is to be installed, marked as appropriate. If possible, a photograph taken as a mock-up showing the fitting or card of the same size in situ would be helpful to show what the visual impact will be.
- ❖ Confirmation that your church architect/surveyor is content with the proposal insofar as it impacts upon the fabric of the building.

Applications should be submitted through the Online Faculty System (OFS) at: <https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org/>. For further information, please contact the DAC Secretary.