



Introduction

Installing a new cycle rack at your church can be an excellent way to encourage visitors and promote environmentally friendly travel within your church community. However it is important to carefully consider the options to ensure your structure is successful and sensitive to its surroundings.

Some points to consider when providing new bike racks in your churchyard:

- Survey the congregation to see how many currently cycle to church, and how many would if bike parking was provided. Would it encourage more visitors?
- Check the churchyard for slip and trip hazards and identify areas of level ground, where bikes could be left safely and securely.
- When considering installing a new bike rack you must obtain appropriate permissions and will normally need to apply to the **Archdeacon under List B of the faculty rules** once you know the details of the design, method of fixing and location. You may also need planning permission so please also consult with your Local Planning Authority.
- Be sure to consult the inspecting architect/surveyor too.

Advice on permissions can be found on our [website](#).

Location

The location of the bike rack is integral to its success. Ideally, for the security of both bikes and cyclists, racks need to be well lit and in a visible location to make the most of casual surveillance by passers-by and to reduce the risk of theft. For users, they are best positioned in a visible location close to entrances and with a path clear of obstacles. The racks must not obstruct footpaths, thoroughfares or doorways.

However in the context of historic and listed church buildings the presence of burials and archaeological sensitivity also need to be considered, as well as the architectural context and the visual impact of the racks. Bear in mind space around the racks for cyclists to lock and unlock their bikes. Check the manufacturer's recommended spacing requirements of your chosen design alongside the space available in the churchyard. Consider the gradient of ground and its evenness – if the churchyard is on a slope, place the racks at right angles to it.

Insurance tips and risk management

- Where there aren't racks, it is possible to secure a number of bicycles together, as this lessens their chance of being stolen. However, unless one is fixed to an immovable object, it may not be insured – so please check your own policy.
- Keep bicycles clear of footpaths and doorways to prevent obstruction of other visitors.
- When parking bicycles take care around gravestones and low lying graves and other potentially hidden trip hazards.
- The church may wish to do a risk assessment of the best place for bicycles to be parked and put up signs to guide visitors. They may not, for example, wish bicycles to be locked to railings, in which case an alternative location should be identified.
- Bicycles are personal property and are usually covered under a Home Insurance policy or a bespoke Cycle Insurance. A church's insurance would not cover loss or damage to a bicycle, unless this can be attributable to negligence by the church, e.g. stonework falling onto the bicycle or potholes/ uneven paving in the churchyard causing damage.
- A standard Home or Cycle Insurance policy will stipulate that the bicycle be secured to a fixed location with a strong lock (D-locks generally preferred), or within a locked area (please do check your own policy)

Design

Finding an appropriate design for the bike storage solution is very important, especially when working within a significant and historic setting. Careful consideration of the visual impact of any design and whether it is appropriate in the setting of the church or churchyard is necessary.

The bike rack should be sympathetic to its surroundings, particularly in terms of colour and materials. Materials should be of high quality for appearance and longevity, and chosen with the effects of continued exposure to weather in mind. Rust and peeling paint can give the impression of neglect.

Designs should consider security and support by allowing for different types of locks, supporting the whole bike frame and allowing both wheels to be locked. For this reason butterfly loops, which only lock 1 wheel, are not a preferred option for cyclists.

There are catalogue designs available, or bespoke designs can be commissioned.

Some examples of designs are:

- **Sheffield racks** are the most common design. Those with a low T-bar are better for security and for locking children's bikes.
- **Toast racks** (joined hoops) are not particularly attractive but these don't require foundations.
- **Iron fencing** design.
- **Hitching rings** (steel rings) embedded into walls are good for where there are non-historic churchyard walls.
- **Half-round timbers** bolted to a hidden steel frame are better for rural settings and conservation areas.
- **Plantlock metal planters** weigh 75 kg once filled and bring greenery to urban spaces, with no archaeology implications.

Commissioning an original design for your church can be a great way to ensure the bike rack is sympathetic to its surroundings and can give a positive image of the church to people visiting or passing by.

Providing shelter for bikes may be a consideration, although for short-term stays these are less necessary. Placing the bike rack under an existing shelter or canopy would be ideal, but if constructing a new shelter you should carefully consider the potential visual impact the shelter will have.

Funding

- Prices start at around £100 for a basic stand for 2 bikes.
- Check for a local cycling campaign and contact the Local Planning Authority to see if there is a cycling officer who knows about additional funding.

Promotion and use

- Once you have a bike rack be sure to publicise it. Mention it on your website along with opening times and access details.
- Celebrate your new facilities for low carbon travel. Travelling by bike is nearly 10 times more carbon-efficient than the most efficient of petrol cars.
- Publish a note in church bulletins or any other publications and spread the word on social media. You could even have a ribbon cutting ceremony and/or start up a church cycling group.
- Consider enhancing lighting and CCTV to improve security and recommend the use of high-quality locks.
- Have a cycle to church day, promote a carbon fast at Lent, advertise your cycle rack to those taking part in [Ride and Stride](#) or consider holding competitions for those who cycle to services.

Find out more

The cycling charity, [Sustrans](#), is a good source of cycling related information.

Some Councils have good guidance available on cycle parking online (some even have a cycling officer). Keep in mind this is usually written for new developments and not the historic environment.

Check if you have a local cycling campaign who may have guidance or helpful insight to share.

The Church of England has teamed up with Sustrans to produce a series of cycle tours linking the country's Cathedrals and historic churches. For example, see the cycle tour for [Worcester](#).

