

Combating metal theft with the new roof security alarm

Case Study: Diocese of Bristol

Rainy days cast a cloud

Situated in Swindon, St. Peter's serves the two large housing estates of Pinehurst and Penhill. For a number of years, St. Peter's had been targeted by metal thieves who were taking the lead flashings and lead from the flat roofs.

heavy rain in case any lead theft had been missed," Secretary of the PCC Greta Davies told us.

The costs were mounting

Every time St. Peter's made an insurance claim they had to meet an excess of £100, which soon added up. As an Urban Priority Area parish in a relatively poor area, the costs were becoming difficult for the church to manage.

To tackle the problem, the PCC had all the downpipes painted with anti-climb paint. SmartWater was also used at the church. After having heard about the problem, the Archdeacon of Malmesbury approached St. Peter's suggesting they become part of an Ecclesiastical campaign to demonstrate the effectiveness of roof alarms.

An alarm that works

On 9th June 2012, the alarm came into its own, when thieves activated the system. In less than five minutes guards were at the church searching the grounds. Thankfully the thieves had been frightened off before taking any lead. The very next morning Greta Davies received an update from the security company explaining just what had happened, and passed on the news to the churchwarden.

The new system has brought St. Peter's a great deal of reassurance, and the church no longer has the worry of trying to find the excess for making a claim. *"More than anything it has given us peace of mind,"* says Greta. *"We are delighted that the security guards will respond so quickly."*

For more information about the new electronic roof security system, or to arrange a free,* no-obligation site survey, please call **0845 600 9659**. You can also download an alarm fact sheet at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters. For expert advice tailored to your church, please contact your local Insurance Consultant and Surveyor (IC&S) who will be pleased to help. You can also speak to our customer services team on **0845 777 3322**.

*UK mainland only – travel expenses may be applicable offshore.

Pictures: (Top) St. Peter's. (Bottom left and right) A typical alarm installation: Alarm sounder and blue strobe in church tower, and infrared motion detector.



The theft wasn't just an ongoing financial problem to the church, it caused a high level of structural damage too. When the thieves ripped up the flashing, they damaged the roof tiles underneath, and thieves also knocked down a brick parapet on the hall roof in order to access the lead. Even when the church replaced the lead with Ubiflex thieves slit it with knives to check if there was any lead underneath.

Although not much lead was ever taken, the damage caused by the thieves each time was extremely worrying for the PCC and the congregation. Rainwater poured into the church on a number of occasions. *"We began to dread*



Beaufort House,
Brunswick Road,
Gloucester, GL1 1JZ