

INTRODUCTION

Every person in the UK has the right to worship in peace in whichever way they believe. When criminals assault them, steal their property, and damage their buildings they are attacking that right to worship. This booklet is intended to stimulate discussion, guide you to where appropriate advice can be found, and encourage you to think about the problem now, rather than after an offence is committed when it is too late.

Some Frequently asked Questions.....

"What sort of crimes are committed against Places of Worship?"

Theft and criminal damage are the most common crimes. Most of these crimes are opportunistic and can be avoided by taking some basic precautions. Thinking about the problem now will ensure that you are prepared, and will avoid much of the upset that can occur when an offence is committed.

"Most crimes against Places of Worship occur in the inner city, don't they?"

No, crime can occur any time, anywhere. They occur in both urban and rural areas. Just because you live in a quiet rural hamlet do not assume that crime will not occur.

"Crime is a fact of life. We should just put up with it."

Crime is a community problem. A Place of Worship is often a focal point and a community asset. If that asset is being broken into or damaged then the community should assist in looking after it.

"Who can help us with the problem of crime in our Places of Worship?"

National Churchwatch is a multi-faith organisation which is dedicated to reducing crime in our Places of Worship. It offers specialised advice on a variety of crime issues relating to the Place of Worship. Visit the website at www.nationalchurchwatch.com for more information.

Alternatively you can contact Nick Tolson, the National Churchwatch Co-ordinator direct on 07931 353395.

Your local Crime Reduction Officer will be happy to give you advice. Contact your local Police Station for details. Remember that these officers are specially trained to spot weaknesses in your security that an untrained eye may miss.

Ecclesiastical Insurance will also be able to offer security advice relating to your Place of Worship. Check your policy documents for details.

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This book is published by Nick Tolson

"How do I start up my own Churchwatch?"

Setting up a Churchwatch is very simple.

Firstly, contact your local Crime Reduction Officer to find out if there are any similar schemes in the area.

Secondly, inform the different Places of Worship in your area that you are thinking about a churchwatch system. You will probably find they will want to be part of this and will assist you.

Thirdly, think about what sort of Churchwatch is most appropriate. Is it to be a warning system to combat travelling criminals, will it involve training ministers or lay people in crime reduction techniques, or something different.

Contact National Churchwatch using the details above. They will give you advice, help you plan a meeting and will keep you updated with the latest crime reduction advice relating to Places of Worship. Sharing information and techniques is vital, if someone has a successful idea then it can be spread all around the country very quickly.

Once you have decided what is most appropriate, hold a meeting and explain the system. Contact the local media, you will find they will publicise your scheme and may reach people who would like to help you.

Remember, in the three major churchwatches in the country, crime against Places of Worship was reduced by up to 60% over five years.

Churchwatch does work.

Simple Security Advice for Places of Worship

- ❑ Look at your Place of Worship as a criminal would. What could you easily steal? Have you a photograph and detailed description of your valuable items? Are they marked so that the police can return it to you if they recover them?
- ❑ Have you carried out a general risk assessment in relation to your workers, volunteers, and building security?
- ❑ Put security as a fixed item in your budget. Every Place of Worship needs extra security and to increase it over a few years will ensure that when the time comes for you to suffer from crime you will have done everything practical to limit the offence. Remember that security lighting and other features can make your Place of Worship more welcoming.
- ❑ Have you spoken to your neighbours and asked them to ring the police if anything suspicious happens? Reassure them the police will not mind if it turns out to be a false alarm. Invite them into your Place of Worship on regular occasions to tell them how much you appreciate them keeping an eye on the building for you.
- ❑ Allow your building to be used by other groups if necessary. A busy building is far less likely to suffer crime than an empty one.
- ❑ Don't be afraid to seek advice, but make sure that it is from someone who deals specifically with Places of Worship. If in doubt call National Churchwatch who will put you in touch with the appropriate person.

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PERSONAL SAFETY OF MINISTERS OF RELIGION

Ministers of Religion have a responsibility for their own safety, that of their faithful and that of the fabric and contents of their Place of Worship.

Property can be repaired or replaced if necessary but even attacks on the persons of Ministers of Religion can result in severe disabling injury trauma and in death.

Would-be thieves, particularly those with drug related problems capitalise on the caring nature of Ministers of Religion and will come prepared with all manner of hard luck stories. These hard luck stories could quickly turn to abuse, threats and culminate in violence if these persons feel frustrated in their aims of obtaining money.

Please consider the following Crime Prevention suggestions:

- 1 Look after yourself and your Place of Worship.
- 2 Keep no monies on premises longer than absolutely necessary.
- 3 Keep a light on and the radio on whilst you are away from home.
- 4 Use the spy hole every time you answer the door.
- 5 You may hate doing it but refuse to give money or handouts to unknown casual callers. They are probably not in real need but drug abusers looking for a handout for drugs.
- 6 Whenever you secure the Place of Worship of an evening ask a member of your faith to remain with you until you have locked up.
- 7 Beware of Bogus callers to your Place of Worship. They may take the form of Bogus Officials (e.g. posing as persons from Public Utilities) Bogus Dealers (e.g. interested in purchasing antique fittings or fixtures) or Bogus workmen (e.g. unsolicited persons offering to do repairs to roofs, walls etc).
- 8 Get to know your local Crime Prevention Officer (C.P.O.) and do not hesitate to seek his/her advice.

REMEMBER YOU ARE OF NO USE TO YOUR FAITHFUL IF YOU GET INJURED AND ARE UNABLE TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES OF YOUR MINISTRY — SO BE SENSIBLE AND STAY SAFE!

SECURITY OF PLACES OF WORSHIP

Thefts from Places of Worship are on the increase and we must react immediately before it gets out of hand.

One would like to believe that visitors would be interested tourists or someone seeking a short period of solitude and contemplation, but unfortunately, this is not always so.

Places of Worship have high value furnishings and fittings all of which are very attractive to the thief. Even the offertory box will receive unwelcome attention.

It is the responsibility of the whole community to help reduce crime, that is why ChurchWatch and other schemes are being introduced throughout the country. By enlisting the help of the community in this way the forces of crime will be greatly reduced.

Crime prevention requires physical initiatives by removing the smaller items of value to a secure area within the Place of Worship when not needed for services, and includes locks and bolts and alarms.

All items of value need to be identified by marking them with the name and the postcode of the Place of Worship. An inventory of the contents of the Place of Worship should be made and kept up to date. Recording any distinguishing marks on the items that will make identification easier. Photographs, black and white or colour, scaled against a 12-inch rule or 50p piece should be taken of the items or the important internal items of the Places of Worship recorded on video. The inventory, photographs/video being kept in a safe place away from the Place of Worship.

THE EXTERIOR SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

GATES

Starting at the perimeter, gates can be kept locked at night if thought necessary. They should be well maintained and you should make sure that hinges function properly and the gates cannot be easily lifted off. If this is not so then consider burring over the top of the hinge pin or brazing a piece of metal on top of the pin. To do this on one pin properly is usually enough, to do both or all if there are more, is obviously better. An alternative would be to turn one of the pins over.

- (a) If the gate is hidden from public surveillance, then the gate should be stronger than normal.
- (b) A gate with broken hinges, broken joints, wet or dry rot, warped, twisted, too tight or too loose would be considered unsuitable until the defects have been rectified. Remember that persistent slamming will ultimately break joints and hinges.
- (c) Make sure bolt holes are free from soil, stones etc and that hinges and catches are well maintained and oiled.

You should bear in mind that there may well be a public footpath leading through your churchyard, garden of remembrance, etc. If this is the case and your gate is a double opening type, consider restricting entry to allow one person through at a time, like a wicket gate.

BOUNDARIES

It is essential to have a definable perimeter. The perimeter is usually a wall, fence or hedge. It is designed normally to denote that property the other side is different from the public side. To make access and exit difficult, suggest that anyone wishing to enter the area should go to a designated gate or other entrance to do so. Boundaries of any type should be well maintained at all times and any damage repaired as quickly as possible.

HEDGES

Remember that the best form of hedging for a barrier is one that is thick and difficult to penetrate. Choose something like hawthorn, privet, holly, yew, laurel, etc. The height of the hedge is important. If you want natural surveillance, the height will have to be restricted to between four to five feet in order that people can see over. The hedging should of course be maintained and looked after, that way it will last you many years for little cost.

WALLS

Stone or brick walls should be maintained and any broken coping stones or blocks replaced or repaired as quickly as possible, the same applies to any graffiti on boundary walls or gates. The longer it is left, the more chance of more graffiti being added. Make sure your property is seen to be looked after and you will have the respect of those people who live and use the area.

TREES

If you have trees near or within your boundary, then make sure if you want people to be able to see into the area of the Place of Worship etc. that they are correctly pruned. Wherever possible, if trees or shrubbery are overgrown, prune to the height you require.

From the boundary or perimeter there should be only entrances you require. Please note that the use of barbed wire should be treated with caution. Section 143 of Highways Act 1959 concerning the use of barbed wire stated:

‘Deemed to be a nuisance if likely to injure persons using the highway.’

British Standard 1722 parts 9, 10 and 12 or 1962 deals with all aspects of security fencing. There are a variety of methods and devices used for topping a wall or fence to prevent persons climbing over.

THE ROOF AND FALL PIPES

Places of Worship are normally irregular in shape and design. In most cases, due to this, it is impossible to maintain natural surveillance of the building line. Access to the roof is normally relatively easy due to large cast iron fall pipes and strategically placed fuel tanks, etc. Measures can be taken to prevent this however. Anti-climb paint could be applied to fall pipes not less than eight foot from the ground. This is a type of paint which does not dry and is very slippery.

BARBED WIRE AND ANTI-CLIMB PAINT ON YOUR FALL PIPES

Advertise the fact that you have used anti-climb paint on your fall pipes, it will be good deterrent. Roof materials can also be painted or coated with a bitumastic compound which will deter theft and make disposal of any metal much more difficult.

One of the most common forms of crime associated with Places of Worship is the theft of lead flashing from the roof. Unless regular checks are made of the roof you will never know (until it rains) that it has been stolen. If replacement or repair is necessary, look to other materials which have no resaleable value and will do the jobs as efficiently, if not better. Low level roofs can also present problems. Barbed wire, barbed tape or roller devices can be fitted to deter the criminal or vandal and deny access. The same applies to parapets. Again anti-climb paint can be used.

Regarding anti-climb paint, there are a few points to bear in mind:

- (i) Prior to treating, all surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned to remove all loose rust, scale and dirt.
- (ii) If it is used on absorbent material, eg brick, stone or concrete, a sealer should first be applied.
- (iii) The paint should be applied at least one eighth of an inch thick. (iv) In areas where dust and leaves blow, it may have to be renewed periodically.

LADDERS

Ladders appear to be a favourite item to have around a Place of Worship. Ordinary ladders used by helpers or contractors must NEVER be left where they are convenient for criminals to gain access to a building. If they have to be left outside, they should be padlocked to fixtures or rawlbolted to a solid wall. Ladders providing access to roofs and buildings that are fixed should have the first rung well above the height of an average person. A section of the ladder for at least five feet should be protected by a padlocked hinged metal cover.

SHEDS AND OUTBUILDINGS

Most Places of Worship have a gardener/handyman type person who does many jobs in order to keep the building and its surrounding features in good order. If you have a shed or outbuilding to house tools and machinery, then give that area some consideration. Such a building may contain ladders and tools of all different kinds including power tools, eg motor mowers, strimmers, excavators etc. All of these items are valuable to the criminal, either as a direct gain or to use to attack other premises, maybe the Place of Worship or some other building close to it. Accordingly, this particular place should be well secured, out of sight.

If necessary, make it more secure to stop unauthorised entry. If there is a window or windows in the building, it is necessary either to brick or seal the window up and black out in order that no one can see the items it

contains. Remember, when your handyman is working, make sure he locks it up when he goes away from the building. On far too many occasions, I have know the doors to such a building to be wide open with the key in the lock, the dutiful workman nowhere to be seen. By doing this he is giving the criminal an opportunity to either steal objects or the key and certainly give him the opportunity of seeing what goods are available.

LIGHTING

The use of effective security lighting is very important, particularly for isolated buildings. Regrettably in many premises the light provided for security does not equate with modern methods of installation or efficiency. Timing devices for switching lighting on and off are susceptible to variations in length of daylight and power interruptions. The easiest method to switch lighting on and off is to use a photoelectric cell. This device switches lighting on when daylight fades and off when it returns. It will cater for changes in the weather and many switch on during fog or thunderstorms dependent upon the level it is set. It is not time dependent and of course cannot be forgotten to be switched on or off. One thing that should be avoided is a simple toggle switch labelled 'security lighting' which can easily be reached by the criminal.

Lighting can be used every effectively to deter a criminal from approaching the target and also aids detection if the intruder presses home his attack. It is worth remembering that Acts of Parliament, for instance the Health and Safety at Work Act, place a responsibility on employers to provide sufficient and suitable lighting for people whether employees or visitors. Cabling should also be protected where it is at a level that can be reached. Steel conduit could also incorporate intruder alarm wiring which, if tampered with could create an alarm condition. (Intruder alarms will be dealt with later) It may also be necessary to protect lights with anti-vandal devices.

Any broken or damage wiring or light should be treated with suspicion. It may be casual vandalism or the start of a systematic attempt to create dark areas in your defence.

If a public footpath or right of way runs through your property, then consider those members of the public who use the pathway. Attacks on people are not unheard of around Places of Worship, which usually lend themselves to the criminal hiding and lurking in the shadows.

The reasons for lighting are as follows, and you should consider each point:

- (a) To illuminate vulnerable areas on the vertical surfaces of the buildings in order to reveal anyone attacking the building, for example trying to force an entry, climbing drain pipes or moving onto a roof area.
- (b) To reveal an intruder in an unlit area between floodlit building and an observers' position.
- (c) To enhance the aesthetic appearance of your building.
- (d) For amenity purposes.

If any building is adequately lit it is highly unlikely that any criminal is going to risk a lengthy operation whilst so illuminated. The cost of various forms of lighting varies, sodium lighting is cheaper to run than halogen type lighting and your requirements will vary. You can obtain a full survey from your electricity board or alternatively contact your Crime Prevention Officer.

There is another form of controlled light that is worth mentioning to you due to its cost effective and crime prevention nature, that is lighting controlled by an outside detector. The detector is usually a passive infra red device that picks up body heat and could be some distance away from the actual light. When a person enters the field of the detection device the light is switched on automatically and stays on for a predetermined time. This is a very cost effective system and has a high deterrent factor to the criminal.

Remember: criminals do not like to be bathed in light.

DOORS

Doors in Places of Worship are nearly always very large with a huge lock and key several inches long. Most have been decorated in some way by the village blacksmith, their skill was remarkable. His work was an advertisement to all who entered and it was the best. The craft of the wood worker also played a large part usually with ornamentation at the head of the door. The locksmith played no small a part in producing overall a very functional item. The lock on your door could in itself be quite valuable, the lock and key again being an advertisement of his skill.

During the day, where it is felt it is essential the Place of Worship building be open to visitors, then entry should be confined to the main door. All other doors should be locked. By doing this you limit the criminal's opportunity to escape undetected.

Locks on large doors are usually suitable for their task, if you are in any doubt ask your local Crime Prevention Officer or locksmith to check for you. They will very quickly be able to tell you if it is suitable. On smaller doors, and those fitted with glass either in the door or in the vicinity there should be a 5-lever mortise lock which complies with British Standard 3621. In the case of large double doors, the case of the lock should be at least six inches in length. The Chubb Lock company actually makes locks large enough and suitable for this task. All doors on the outside of premises should be at least 1.75" (44mm) thick. Some doors will have external hinges, etc where the door opens outwards and the edge of the hinge can be seen when the door is closed. In this case, it is important that hinge bolts, sometimes called 'dog bolts' are fitted. Hinge bolts are fixed projections on the hinged side of the door which slide into recesses on the hanging post of the door frame and hold the door firmly in position, even if the hinges are removed.

Double doors normally require bolts to one leaf and it is strongly recommended that level operated flush bolts be fitted to the closing edge of the door. Make sure that these are maintained and repaired if necessary. Soil and grit sometimes get into the receiving hole and as a result, the bolt cannot be used. Make sure they are clear.

All doors should be kept locked and bolted where practicable when the building is not in use. However, it may well be considered desirable that the Place of Worship be kept open for visitors and any other legitimate person wishing to use it. Unfortunately, there are some people who will use an open Place of Worship as an invitation to steal. You may have to consider, therefore, publishing set times when the Place of Worship will be open and arrange for a representative to be in attendance during those times. You may not adopt this system at the moment, but circumstances may change and this course of action can be implemented.

KEY SECURITY

The subject of keys obviously follows the previous section on doors. Key security is a very important aspect of your security. In this particular section, I am only referring to the keys for the main door and not for other items like safes, chests, belfry etc. This will be dealt with later. Keep the number of key holders to a minimum, preferably to a member of your congregation living nearby.

Never leave keys out Places of Worship under a mat or anywhere else. Criminals usually know all the hiding places.

Never leave keys in the lock. Perhaps one exception to this is where another door is used as a fire escape but the external keyhole must be securely blocked up.

A register should be kept of all authorised key holders and no keys re-cut without your permission.

If keys are lost then the lock must be changed. If the lock is to the British Standard 3621 a less expensive alternative may be to replace or rearrange the levers in the lock and have new keys cut. This can only be done by a qualified locksmith.

BOILER HOUSE

The boiler house door tends to be neglected. It is normally out of sight (and out of mind). The construction is sometimes flimsy and must therefore be looked at carefully. It should be repaired or replaced as necessary. Door strengthening kits are available from companies such as the Chubb Lock Company.

If tools or ladders are kept in the boiler house, or if it gives access to the main building, extra care must be taken. The lock on this door should again be to British Standard 3621 and, if outward opening, hinge bolts fitted.

Remember — considerable damage can be done to the structure of the building if the central heating system is made unserviceable by vandals during winter months.

WINDOWS

Many buildings are fitted with stained glass windows, usually set high in the walls of buildings. Damage caused to these windows, which may be hundreds of years old will be very difficult and expensive to rectify. There are two main methods of protecting these:

(a) The fitting of a fine wire mesh across the windows from the outside. The best material for this use is either 'Weidmesh' or 'Expanded Metal', both are commercially available. This method is not totally effective against vandalism, but will prevent access if correctly fitted. Normally it should be welded onto a strong frame. Your local ironmonger may be willing to fit bars internally as an alternative but it is recommended that such work on Places of Worship is carried out by professionals used to this type of work.

(b) The use of unbreakable glazing materials, ie polycarbonate has many benefits and should be professionally fitted. It is not as unsightly as bars or mesh grills. It acts as double glazing so may also help conserve heat. It is at least 250 times stronger than glass and missiles will bounce off it, it is extremely difficult to burn and is lighter in weight than glass.

If your Place of Worship has a history of damage then this must be a serious consideration. If access is given to any window which can be reached by sloping roof, flat roof or strong drain pipes, the consideration must be given to either sealing the window permanently (if wooden, screw up from the inside, if metal, weld up) or fitting a good quality lock. Remember though, that the building still needs to be ventilated.

Louvre windows should be replaced with conventional windows unless they are considered totally inaccessible. If it is necessary to retain this type of window, then strong consideration should be given to fitting 'Weidmesh' or 'Expanded Metal'. Always seek professional guidance on this matter.

CELLARS

Cellar flaps on doors should be secured internally by means of tie-bars and padlocks. The external surface of the door should be lined with sheet steel. If no internal access is possible to the flap or door, they should be secured externally with good quality padlocks or a close shackle padlock for high security.

If you no longer use the cellar — brick it up. Remember to maintain the fabric of your building, it may be necessary to fix an air brick. Consult an architect if in doubt.

ARCHITECTURAL LIAISON

In latter years, crime prevention has taken on a new outlook. Much importance has been placed on 'designing out' crime. The fact is in some cases we have created opportunities for the criminal to commit crime by the way we have designed areas and buildings. In an effort to reduce the opportunities, the Police, together with architects and planners, are getting together to discuss crime in new areas where plans are proposed. It is important to ensure security is considered at the design stage of new buildings, when upgrading or the

expansion of premises is due to take place. Implementing security at this stage can be very cost effective. In the design of new sites and in upgrading or extending existing complexes there has been a tendency to ignore the security and safety benefit which can be derived. Planners, architects and your local Crime Prevention Officer can help you. Many Police Forces in the United Kingdom now have designated Architectural Liaison Officers who have expertise in reading plans and talking to architects and planners.

In the process of clearing a site and actually building, it is difficult to make it inaccessible to determined thieves. To carry protection to extremes would be to make premises completely unworkable, the problems experienced are as follows:

- (a) The cost (which you indirectly pay for)
- (a) The reduction of amenities to staff to an unacceptable level. The necessity of major structural alterations in themselves may be prohibitive due to cost.

Apart from getting into premises and sites, the thief also has to get his proceeds out. This can be more tricky or dangerous particularly when heavy or bulky goods are to be removed. All the thief wants to do is get in and out as quickly, safely and as quietly as he can with the minimum of effort for the removal of your property. The ideal would be to achieve a condition where criminals consider the difficulties and risks are too great. If it is accepted the criminal cannot be stopped completely from entering, it follows that the objective is to make him uncomfortable and as apprehensive as possible when entering or leaving and to make attractive goods as inaccessible as possible.

The ultimate is to have the measures required incorporated by architects at the design stage. This, however, rarely occurs and the resultant costs involved in carrying out structural alterations usually means they are not considered. Even when they are, they are rarely carried out in full.

If you have any plans to carry out alterations or extensions on a building, contact the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, he will be able to help you.

INTERNAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

THE INTERIOR WHAT CAN YOU DO?

During the last few years, the following items HAVE been stolen:

vestry and sanctuary carpets even threadbare ones:

decorated wooden organ pipes, these were believed to have been taken for sale to interior decorators,

metal pipes obviously have a high scrap metal value:

stained glass from windows, you can see this in most antique shops and it is highly valued by the interior decorator, not only patterned glass is stolen but also plain glass:

locks complete with key handles;

hinges and in one case the whole door,

wooden carvings, not only figures but also the ends of pews.

lectern,

parts of a pulpit or font and stone statues and memorials:

paintings and other pictures:

early church instruments:

vestments: altar cloths:

lacework and other decorative textiles from the Place of Worship and vestry:

altar rails, benches and chairs:

oil lamps,

bearers of different kinds: loose stonework: books; — in fact almost anything associated with a Place of Worship.

Amongst the most popular are probably brass articles, candlesticks, vases and crosses, and of course, free-standing offertory boxes. There are very few items left that cannot be stolen. I would go so far as to say that if you know of anything else, it has probably been stolen, including flowers.

If you want your Place of Worship or building to be open to the public, you have three alternatives open to you:

(i) To leave the Place of Worship open and face all possible consequences. If this is the case, the general principle is that nothing of value should be easily removable. My fervent hope is that this solution will not apply, you may have been crime free in the past, but your freedom will not last. Thefts and/or damage will eventually happen. If necessary restrict the opening periods and have a notice, giving opening times, displayed.

(ii). Never leave the key in the door and never in hiding places.

(iii) Restrict opening periods and have a member of the congregation present at all times. A duty rota could be drawn up and displayed on the door or some other suitable place. There are many older people who would give up an hour for such a reason. This can be arranged to take into account cleaning and flower arranging rotas.

When open and unattended, all valuable items should be placed in a secure area. High value, small items should be in a safe. Large items that are of value, for example furniture, should be fixed to the floor if possible. It is essential, however, that with older pieces of furniture, you seek advice, fixing metal plates with screws can be damaging and substantially devalue the item.

SAFES

Many Places of Worship have safes — of a type. Most are not SAFE at all. Old safes give the appearance of being solid and totally secure, in some cases this is not the reality. Experience has shown that old safes do not withstand an attack with modern drilling and cutting tools.

With a free standing safe it is possible in some cases to brick the back, top and sides in order to strengthen it. Before a decision is made on this seek advice from your insurance company or your Crime Prevention Officer. If no safe is available, consideration may be given to acquiring one. Although the cost of the safe may be thought high, your Place of Worship may possess many items of great value, particularly in relation to gold or silver jewelled altar ornaments. Many of these have great historical significance — they may be irreplaceable. The choice of safe for a particular risk is influenced by a number of considerations.

(a) The value of items you intend to keep in the safe. Many safes are insurance related. In this particular case, you should consult your insurance company.

(b) The size of items you wish to place inside. Obviously if you wish to keep only money, then a large amount can be kept in a small area. If books, larger gold and silver items and manuscripts are to be kept, a large safe is required. Remember that large amounts of cash are obviously the most attractive targets as they are instantly negotiable. Keep such sums of money as short a time as possible. If you do not already do so, consider the use of a night safe at your local bank.

(c) The location of the safe is an important factor, it should be either in a wall or free standing bolted to the floor. If you have a secure area, as previously mentioned, that is where your safe should be situated. The longer the criminal can work unseen, and without fear of detection, the better the quality of safe required.

(d) The weight of the safe. Removal of the safe so that it can be attacked elsewhere is a method often used by criminals. The weight of the safe must be ascertained to decide if special steps are required in order to resist this type of attack. Just because you can't move it, doesn't mean it will never go. How did it get there in the first place: Generally speaking, if a safe is under 15 cwt. then it should be bolted to the floor.

Unfortunately, the theft of money from a safe is a problem that occurs occasionally. Almost inevitably the safe has been entered with relative ease, usually by use of the key. The key to the safe should be in someone's possession, never in 'another safe place'. If there is more than one key, know where they are. A frequent problem is that a minister will move from the Place of Worship and no check as to who holds the keys is made. Eventually various people can obtain keys. Some people may fall out of favour but will retain the key. The new minister will be unaware and the problems start.

One solution may be that if a new safe is obtained, it should be either a combination lock or both key and combination. It may be prudent to periodically change the combination as and when necessary.

OFFERTORY BOXES

Theft from offertory boxes is probably one of the most common crimes committed in Places of Worship. Many Places of Worship still have wooden boxes which are fixed to the sides of pews or to wooden structures in the building. These should be replaced with metal wall safes and should be bolted and grouted into the masonry.

It is appreciated that in order to fulfil their function, offertory boxes must be positioned in conspicuous positions. It is therefore essential they are emptied frequently, the money being banked and not left to accumulate.

INTRUDER ALARMS

An intruder alarm is designed to provide a warning at the earliest possible moment of entry or attempted entry by a criminal into the protected premises. In this particular case, this will probably be an electrical installation and should conform to British Standard 4737.

The physical protection of your premises is the first and most important consideration. Some places and items cannot be totally physically secured and this is where the intruder alarm is worth considering. DO NOT dismiss this aspect of security without exploring its possibilities.

The reasons why you should consider an alarm system:

(i) Having an alarm system, in conjunction with good physical security, if an attack is made, it will warn other authorities or people living nearby, who can take the necessary action. Thus the time available for the criminal to carry out a successful crime can be reduced.

(ii) If a criminal considers the presence of an intruder alarm at your premises will prevent a successful outcome to his operation, he may decide not to bother. The mere fact that the alarm is there may be sufficient to dissuade him from his purpose. Therefore, there is a deterrent factor and although it cannot be measured, it is certainly useful.

(iii) There are occasions when it would prove difficult or impossible to adequately protect a building by means of physical security devices, eg. an organ loft. The alarm may be the only way of providing an acceptable form of protection.

(iv) In view of the high cost of manufacture and installation of some forms of physical security to a high standard, the capital cost of an intruder alarm may well be lower.

Enquiries are sometimes made as to the amount of discount or premium reduction an insurance company will give when an intruder alarm is installed. As a general principle, if the alarm has been requested by the insurer as a requirement, then no discount will be given. If however, the risk is one which the insurers would accept with purely physical protection, but an alarm is installed, then consideration may be given to discount. Please check with your insurance company, preferably before the alarm is installed, they may wish to make certain stipulations.

If you consider it would be a help, your Crime Prevention Officer will give you further advice. It may well be that you wish to protect only a small part of your building such as the secure room or safe, the system can be designed according to your requirements. It can be an audible system with bells or siren only or it could be a monitored system to an intruder alarm company central station.

The intruder alarm companies are very competitive and it is suggested that you seek quotations from at least three companies. Certain standards have been attained over the years and you should make sure that the company you choose are members of NACOSS. That way you will have certain safeguards.

Consult with your insurance company before you sign a contract, they may have some observations to make.

PROPERTY MARKING

Property marking is a term used to make anything you own identifiable both to yourself and the police. It is a nationally and internationally accepted principle .

In the United Kingdom you do this by putting your post code (every building has one) and either the number of the premises or part of the name. Whatever article is so marked can be returned to you should it be stolen or lost.

There are many items of property, both large and small, which are attractive to the criminal in a Place of Worship. Such items may be of particularly high value and very often unique and impossible to replace. If you are unable to trace a post code for your building the post code of the home of your minister could be used.

Property marking is a quick, do-it-yourself task costing very little. The following are methods used:

ULTRA-VIOLET MARKING

Using a special ultra-violet marking pen, sometimes called a security marker. This mark is invisible to the eye until viewed under an ultra violet lamp. This type of pen can be used on any porous material. For instance in a Place of Worship, on furniture of any kind. With wooden items it should be marked on the underneath,

preferably in a place which has not been polished. It can also be used on any other materials ie on certain plastics, usually those with rough surfaces and on unglazed or semi-glazed pottery.

If a mark is made on an item usually in full sunlight then after a period of time — about eighteen months — it will fade and need renewing. On wooden items, if done on an unpolished surface, it will last indefinitely.

With this form of marking being invisible, it is important to advertise the fact that the property has been marked. Usually small stickers are given with an ultra-violet marker there is also obviously a deterrent aspect.

Very briefly, the reasons for marking your property in this way are three fold:

- (i) To assist in recovery and restoration of stolen or lost property to the owner as quickly as possible.
- (ii) To make the disposal of property by the criminal difficult and enhance the prospects of detection.
- (iii) To act as a deterrent

ENGRAVING

Engraving can be done by using a diamond tipped pen or other sharp pointed tool. A stencil can be used to effect a neat job but alternatively it can be done free hand, any metal or plastic item can be so marked. Remember this kind of marking is visible and permanent. The same effect can be obtained by using an electric engraver.

CERAMIC MARKER

The tool for marking ceramic items is called a 'ceramic marker' or 'titanium pen'. This type of marking is again visible and leaves a deposit of titanium on the glaze being impossible to remove. The mark actually looks like a faint pencil mark.

PUNCHING DIES

Punching with a hammer and a set of dies is only suitable for heavy items and probably not suitable for use inside your building, but can be used on garden tools, motor mowers etc.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Taking photographs of precious items is again an important factor, for two reasons:

(a) Should an item be stolen, you can accurately describe the item and provide the relevant photograph for use by the Police. Remember all Police Forces circulate photographs of stolen property. In addition to internal communication we are also in a position to take advantage of many antique trade magazines and papers offering a free service in publishing stolen items with photographs. A magazine called TRACE is available monthly and specialises in retrieving stolen works of art and antiques.

(b) Should you be needed to identify property, which has come into the possession of the Police, then you can positively say that you are the owner, it is your item and provide proof.

Photographic records can be carried out by a keen photographer or by specific companies who provide this service. The professional can also photograph any hallmarks on items and any marks and blemishes which make your item identifiable. Remember you must photograph items against a negative background with a ruler placed alongside the item to give an accurate scale. Whenever possible, photograph only one item in each exposure. Trying to save money by photographing several items is a little false in your objective. If it is necessary for the Police to enlarge your photograph in order to prepare it for reprinting the quality is lost. Keep the negative safely as the Police may prefer to use the negatives for reproduction rather than your photograph.

INVENTORIES

It is also important that one person has the responsibility of instituting an inventory of all items in your Place of Worship. Anything of value and which can be moved should be included.

Include everything, even those things that you may think are of little value that no one would steal them. Your knowledge may not be as good as the criminals. Measure items accurately and record all signs of damage such as scratches, dents, splits, tears and any other blemish and imperfection. It is the meticulous noting of such details, which can turn a common item into one that is unique and readily identifiable. The items should be kept in a safe place.

Periodically the items should be checked by the responsible person. Any losses should be immediately reported to the Police, any items purchased or presented to you should immediately be added to the content of the book.

SUBSTITUTE ITEMS

Consideration should be given to displaying plastic, plate or wooden replicas, when the building is open to the public. The valuable items remaining locked away in a secure place. The same applies to important documents which, as well as possibly being stolen, may deteriorate due to conditions of light and heat. etc.

INSURANCE COVER

Whether you own or rent any articles in your Place of Worship you need insurance protection for the contents. The sum insured is the amount of money for which your contents are covered and is the most your insurers will pay even if they are totally destroyed. Your policy requires you to insure your contents for their full value. When completing an insurance proposal form you will have to state what the full value of your property is. The estimate should be what it would cost you to replace an item at today's prices.

If you insure on an indemnity basis you will be paid the cost of repairing damaged articles or replacing what has been stolen or destroyed, less an amount for wear, tear and depreciation.

For items covered on a replacement 'as new' basis, you will be paid in full for the cost of repairs, if they are damaged or the cost of replacing them with equivalent new articles if they are stolen or destroyed.

If you are unfortunate enough to suffer loss or damage, your insurance policy can help you to put things right. Whatever you do, don't leave it to chance — you may regret it.

But what it cannot do is compensate you for the upset and inconvenience, so take all the precautions you can to prevent the worst from happening. Take sound advice and take advantage of the advice this book offers. Whatever you do to improve your security, inform your insurance company.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Much of this book concerns physical protection of your premises, however, there is much that can be achieved with the help of the community around you. People will help you achieve your aims — don't only include members of your congregation. Remember, there are others who realise your building is a focal point of the community and, even though they have no formal involvement, are willing to preserve their community amenities. Not everyone will want to take the initiative, but being an active supporter is very important.

Churchwatch is a good start. Contact your local crime reduction officer to see if there is one already in existence for your area, if not gather a group of churches together and start one. Contact National Churchwatch of 07931 353395 (Web Site www.nationalchurchwatch.com) to find out more.

Neighbourhood Watch is a well established part of community crime prevention. It is run with the help of the local Police by the residents themselves. Residents of a Watch area are encouraged to be on the look out for suspicious behaviour of any kind, all Police Forces are willing to offer guidance on what to look out for and the information needed when reporting. It is NEVER intended that members of the public become involved with confronting criminals. That responsibility belongs to the Police. The Public role is to observe and report. The objectives are:

- (a) To prevent crime within their own homes and their neighbours.
- (b) To adopt a caring attitude for public property around them ie lighting, telephone boxes, village halls, parish rooms, Places of Worship etc.

Some schemes have newsletters to keep group members well informed. If information has to be circulated quickly, then most have a 'phone around system. Some schemes also have meetings periodically to voice any fears and perceptions. These are held in various places including Places of Worship, halls, schools etc. If you have a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in your area then find out who the co-ordinator is and make yourself known. They will be more than willing to help you. If you are having problems let them know, all schemes are proud of their community resources of which you are one. Encourage meetings in your Place of Worship rooms if possible. If you can do this, have someone there to meet them as they may not have had the opportunity of entering before. If they can see you are proud of the building, they will respond.

There are other groups who may well help you. Crime Prevention Panels are well established as local groups devoted to reducing crime. Find out if you have one in your locality. They are a resource you could use.

A slightly newer development has been the setting up of Youth Crime Prevention Panels either attached to a senior panel or based at a local school. They are to educate young people on crime prevention, particularly crimes that affect them most directly such as criminal damage, graffiti, theft etc. If you have one in your area, seek their support in your aims and objectives.

You should also know your local Police Officer. He is available to discuss any problems you may have. By involving as many people as you can, you will enjoy a greater sense of security.

PUBLICITY

Thought should be given as to how much publicity is given when a crime has occurred. Too much publicity can highlight the ease with which further crime can be committed. It is probably best to publicise the crime only to people in the immediate area in an attempt to try and prevent further incidents.

This form of communication is very important. If your own members do not know about your problems, they are unable to help you. Posters and notices of a permanent type warning of risks to be avoided can be displayed on notice boards as a constant reminder. Your local Crime Prevention Officer will be able to assist you with a wide range of posters which may be of help to you. Normally you will have at your disposal some form of magazine or circular. Introduce your aims and objectives through its medium and keep people informed of progress. Mention any incidents of note as this will increase enthusiasm and motivation.

Advertise the fact you are involved in a crime prevention scheme by getting your local newspaper to cover your progress. If you are the first in your area to be involved in a crime prevention scheme, they will be interested and in running an article will give you a great deterrent factor, as well as again keeping your members informed.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Wherever possible one individual should have overall responsibility for security related matters for your building. This will assist co-ordination of effort in putting aims and objectives into practice.

The following may be considered to be his responsibilities:

(a) Reviewing practical aspect of security precautions and consulting with the Police Crime Prevention Officer as and where necessary.

(b) Maintaining contact with various members of your group to provide co-ordination of effort.

(c) Reporting any matters of note to the local Police. It is important here not to take the initiative away from individuals who have to report something immediately via the '999' telephone system or direct to your local Police Station. (Maintain a contact and have the telephone number available.) Either way you should be informed of all such reports. Further advice is given later in this book on the subject.

(d) Maintaining contact with your insurance company as and when necessary.

WHAT THE POLICE NEED TO KNOW

When any object has been stolen from a Place of Worship, the most urgent need is to inform the Police.

You should report what has been stolen and precisely what objects are, using your inventory and photographs, these will be a tremendous help. Police throughout the country recover daily a large number of objects that they believe are stolen property.

Unfortunately, many of these items cannot be returned to their rightful owners because nothing on the items positively identifies them. If the advice already given has been acted on, then you are much more likely to have your property returned.

ADVICE ON THE PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED IN THE EVENT OF A BREAK IN.

AT THE TIME

If you disturb someone who has broken in or entered by other unauthorised means DO NOT confront the person if you are alone. Your job is not to challenge or confront the criminal. Too many cases arise where people who disregard this advice are assaulted unnecessarily.

ACTION

Use the nearest telephone — dial '999'. By doing this you will get a fast response. If you are in a position to get a description of the offender, do so — remember, brief, simple details are the best. Male or female, approximate age, height, build, colours and style of clothing. Is there anything that stands out about this person? Are there any accomplices?

Is a vehicle being used? The registration number would be ideal. If you are unable to get this, the type of vehicle, colour, part of number. If a van, any logo on the side or back?

Which direction did either persons or vehicle go?

AFTER THE EVENT

If you arrive at your building and find there has been a break-in, telephone your nearest Police Station (these details you should have to hand). Do nothing else until an Officer arrives — preserve the scene. This may seem strange, but as far as the Police are concerned, it is very important. Sometimes Police work can be sophisticated. It may well be that the Scenes of Crime Officer or photographer can play their part in the investigation. The first Police Officer to arrive will advise you on what to do.

REMEMBER: DO NOT TOUCH OR CLEAN ANYTHING. PRESERVE THE SCENE OF THE CRIME.

After the Police have done their work at the scene, then everything can be put to right.

Where graffiti has occurred clean the area as soon as possible, if not removed, more will soon be added. It is important to show a caring and proud attitude.

RESTORATION WORK OR MAINTENANCE

The risk of theft or damage may be accentuated when restoration work or maintenance is taking place, so you should be aware of various factors.

If building work is to be extensive, then please bear in mind any possible damage to other fittings, particularly the organ and stained glass etc. Whilst work is in progress altar ornaments or other valuables should be locked away or removed for safe keeping. Where external repairs are in progress, it may well be that your insurance against theft of external lead, copper or other metal may be suspended, check to see. If it is suspended, then attempt to make it the responsibility of the contractors that access to the roof when no one is on site is difficult. Lower ladders should of course be removed and locked away at the end of the day. Make sure that those people who attend your Place of Worship, together with those people living around it, know what you are having undertaken. If they are kept informed, they will help to protect your property.

Make sure there are suitable barriers erected and warning notices in order to keep the public away from the site. You would also be advised to ascertain that the buildings have effected suitable insurances against Public Liability (Third Party) risks and Employer's Liability risks and that such insurances have been extended by specific reference to protect the interest of the authorities of the Place of Worship.

SPECIAL RISKS

There may be special risks associated with your building at certain times of the year. For instance, certain festivals, when special objects may be in the building are out on display which are normally so.

Flower festivals are sometimes a special risk with special artefacts being on display when large numbers of the public are invited. There may be more money in your building. If this is the case, and you are unsure as to whether a risk is constituted, get in touch with your local Crime Prevention Officer, who will help you. Your biggest asset is constant public surveillance, pre-designed routes for the public to take and additional, temporary, physical security. Each occasion has different aspects for you to bear in mind. Let the Crime Prevention Officer know what your ideals are and he will advise accordingly.