

Roof alarm prevents metal theft

How one church's roof alarm successfully thwarted metal theft on three separate occasions



Due to the high value of scrap metal such as lead and copper, churches remain under constant threat of metal theft. Over the years Ecclesiastical has seen a shift in the perpetrators of these crimes from lone, opportunistic individuals to more organised gangs. As a result, the amount of metal stolen during an incident has increased significantly, as has the damage caused during its removal.

As the leading insurer of churches in the UK we are acutely aware of the risks churches face and the heartache and costs such thefts cause. Working closely with the relevant authorities and specialist suppliers, we are exploring ways to try to reduce the incidents of metal theft. Currently one of the most effective ways to reduce metal theft is the installation of a monitored roof alarm.

The impact of effective roof alarm systems

St Bartholomew's church is one of the churches to have installed a monitored roof alarm from one of our approved suppliers. This proved invaluable when in May of this year when the church was targeted 3 times in quick succession.

One morning, the alarm-receiving centre (ARC) received alerts indicating that there was movement on the church's roof. The ARC immediately contacted the nominated individual of the church to warn them of a potential attack. In the meantime, a neighbour had heard the sounding of the alarm and contacted the police who on arrival arrested several individuals, tools in hand.



Whilst the intruders had managed to lift some of the lead flashing, due to the alarm the thieves were unsuccessful in removing any lead from the roof and the damage caused was minor.

The following Sunday, the church was once again targeted and the ARC alerted. However, this time following activation and when the site was checked, the thieves had already fled. Due to the early activation of the alarm, no additional damage was caused to the church.

Finally, just three days later, the church was targeted for a third time. Similar to the first two attacks, the ARC was alerted and the church informed. Once again when the site was checked, no intruders were discovered and no damage caused. The alarm company visited the church the next day and discovered that one of the sensors had been physically tampered with and this was the cause of the initial alerts received.



The main purpose of a roof alarm is to deter thieves, detect intrusion at the earliest opportunity and reduce the risk of a significant loss occurring. Whilst St Bartholomew's did suffer repeated attacks over a short period of time, the damage suffered was minimal and the intruders were unsuccessful in their attempts to remove any lead from the roof.

Left: Camera installed following the three incidents to provide extra security.

If you would like details of our approved roof alarm suppliers visit our [website](#). If you would like to talk to someone direct about the benefits of a roof alarm and the best solution for your church please contact our church customer service team on **0345 777 3321**.

For further risk management advice, Ecclesiastical customers can call our Risk Management Advice line on **0345 600 75312** or email risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.



Above: View from installed camera.