

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 1.1 << Name>> Diocese has developed in recent times a view that crime and fear of crime in their churches was affecting the way that they operated within their communities. Recent initiatives have included setting up a Churchwatch in the Cheltenham area, and running a series of security seminars intended to raise awareness of those who are responsible for both the buildings and the people who use them.
- 1.2 The philosophy of the << Name>> Diocese is that by working together the incidence of crimes against Churches will diminish. In particular the collaboration between Churches, Police, Fire Service, Insurance Companies, National Churchwatch and local community is required.
- 1.3 In recent years there has been an increase in crimes against clergy in both the Diocese and generally around the country. The Diocese is paying particular attention to clergy housing, to ensure the safety of clergy and their families in their homes.

1. DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS

- 2.1 While the Diocese is concerned about all crime there is an emphasis on disorder, violence, damage, particularly arson.
- 2.2 The protection of people includes the ministers of religion, members of the Churches, visitors to the Churches and surrounding property and local neighbours.
- 2.3 The protection of property includes the Churches and their contents, grounds including cemeteries, hall/social centre, ministers' homes and the property of those visiting the Churches.

1. NATURE & EXTENT OF TARGETED CRIME

- 3.1 Certain factors make it difficult to comment on the nature and extent of crime against people and property. Geographically the boundaries of the << Name>> Diocese are not co-terminus with other boundaries, such as the local authority. This has implications for calculating the nature and extent of crime.
- 3.2 Differences between agencies are apparent in the definition of certain terms – for example, the term “burglary” is defined differently by Police and Fire Service.
- 3.3 It is widely believed that there is significant under reporting of crime against churches. This may be influenced by many factors including insurance claim limits; a perception among some clergy that an acknowledgement of crime is a sign of failure to influence communities; low detection rates do not encourage widescale reporting There is a need to research further the levels and reasons for under reporting and to raise the awareness of the importance of full reporting. In order to establish correct baselines it will be necessary to ensure that all crime is reported in full, according to a defined format.
- 3.4 A study of the crime data available makes it very difficult to analyse the nature and extent of the crime problem. The data is clearly incomplete, and any analysis based on current data could compound problems by prioritising inappropriately. The collection, collation and analysis of data referring to crimes against Churches, ministers of religion and related visitors is a major piece of work

which ought to be started as soon as possible. Accurate, reliable and contemporary information must underpin the Diocesan Strategy

1. STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 Interest in, and commitment to, the reduction of crimes against people and property connected to Churches is shared by a wide group of stakeholders:

- Members of the Clergy
- Users of Churches
- Community groups who use halls
- Community leaders connected to different denominations & faiths
- Church treasurers
- Managers of Churches
- Police, particularly neighbourhood Inspectors and Crime Prevention Officers, Chair of Police Committee
- Fire Service, particularly Fire Safety Officers
- Local Councillors
- Association of British Insurers, particularly the Arson Prevention Bureau
- Media representatives
- Regeneration agencies, whose investment decisions will relate to the function performed by Churches rather than the location themselves
- English Heritage
- Community Safety Groups

4.2 Certain bodies have a particular interest in the development and implementation of the strategy:

- << Name >> Diocese
- << Name >>shire Ecumenical Assembly
- Council of Faiths
- Churches tourism Group

1. STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

5.1 This strategy is based on certain assumptions about the crimes against Churches and people related to them. It is also based on certain assumptions about the perpetrators of these crimes.

5.2 It is assumed that there are certain characteristics relating to Churches and the people related to them that are uniquely relevant to the crimes committed.

- i) The contents of Churches are relatively easy to steal.
- ii) There is a regular flow of people to and from Churches. Not all people are known to each other.
- iii) Access to Churches is often encouraged.
- iv) The isolation of Churches, and their separateness from other properties can make them vulnerable.
- v) The isolation of the clergy can render them personally vulnerable.
- vi) The activities which occur in Churches can make it easy for certain crimes, such as sneak thefts, to be committed.
- vii) On certain occasions, particularly after services or community charitable events, it can be widely known that money is on the premises.

- viii) Certain times of the year can make it easier for different crimes to be committed - for example dark winter nights.
- ix) Many Churches are within, or close to, areas of deprivation. There can be a mis-perception that the appearance of Churches is a sign of affluence.
- x) Low surveillance levels can persuade potential offenders that the risk of being caught is minimal

5.3 Knowledge about those who perpetrate offences against Churches and related people is scant. There is little known information available about the profiles of these individuals. It is possible that studies have been conducted in other parts of the country. It would be an important development if a search could be conducted. It may be possible to initiate specific enquiry lines into the profiles of those convicted locally of certain crimes such as Arson of Churches.

5.4 There is knowledge available about perpetrators of general crimes in the community. A triangulation of certain factors will make it more or less likely that an offence will be committed:

Offender motivation Level of Guardianship Specific Location

It is clear from the descriptions contained in 5.2 that there are certain location features that are very pertinent to the understanding of why crimes are being committed. It is also clear that lax guardianship is a contributing factor:

- Open doors
- People not confronting strangers
- People connected to Churches being perceived as “helpful”
- Vulnerable/older people
- Unprotected property, eg cars

5.5 The theory of crime contributes further to our knowledge by differentiating between “marauders”, who tend to commit crimes locally and “adventurers” who are prepared to travel to steal particular objects. It would be helpful if a fuller understanding were obtained which connected different crimes to different profiles of offenders.

1. STRATEGIC STRENGTH

6.1 The << Name >> Diocese is capable of bringing together people who are knowledgeable about crime in general and those who can relate experiences of crimes related to Churches.

6.2 A range of materials is already available, including a video and booklets.

6.3 An outline National Churchwatch Strategy has been prepared which should influence further the local strategy

6.4 Risk appraisal documentation is already available.

6.5 Key people need to be committed to this initiative, including all faith leaders, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer.

6.6 A wide range of people can be called upon to implement action, including the members of the congregations, officers of the different Churches, users of the properties.

1. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

- 7.1 The cost of securing Churches and protecting ministers, congregations and visitors is seen in general as the responsibility of the individual Churches. Given the current pressure on finances experienced by those Churches which experience the highest levels of crime it is a matter of extreme importance that the current situation should change.
- 7.2 It would appear that no faiths have a security policy in place and therefore attach no strategic investment to issues of security.
- 7.3 The level of investment which each place of worship will attach to security will depend on what they can afford, their previous experience and the perceived importance of the issue.
- 7.4 While there is an absence of baseline data concerning levels of investment in different forms of security it is thought that, in general, insurance is almost universally in place, although there is insufficient data to know how well Churches and ministers are protected. There is also a lack of knowledge around the most appropriate insurance policies. Ecclesiastical Insurance is a leading insurer for certain faiths, but others use a range of insurance companies. It is believed that security alarms are more regularly in place in ministers' houses rather than in Churches themselves. CCTV and Security Lighting are thought to be absent from most Churches.
- 7.5 It is clear that the investment in the security of Churches is considerably below an acceptable level. All possible funding streams should be identified, including Lottery fund, Safer Communities Fund, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Learning and Skills Council.

1. STRATEGIC VISION

“Churches in the << Name >> Diocese will be safe from crime against people and property. A collaboration between faiths, involving ministers and key stakeholders will ensure that the risk of crime is effectively managed, all crime is recorded and receives an appropriate response.”

1. STRATEGIC TARGETS

- 9.1 To increase the level of reporting of crimes against Churches, ministers, members of congregations and visitors to Churches.
- 9.2 To reduce crimes against Churches, ministers, members of congregations and visitors to Churches.
- 9.3 To strengthen the strategic structures which support the security of Churches, through training and education. These should include inter-denominational and inter-faith structures.
- 9.4 To improve the level of information and knowledge available to reduce crime against Churches. In particular this should include agreed data sets, the recording of data, the analysis of data, knowledge about crime patterns and profiles of offenders.
- 9.5 That all denominations and faiths should develop and implement security policies relating to their own area of operations and inter-faith issues.
- 9.6 To develop a suggested framework for improving the basic security system of every church in the << Name >> Diocese. The system will maximise the strengths and resources of each church to secure premises and people. Responsibilities for security should form part of the framework.
- 9.7 To secure increased sustainable investment in the security of all Churches, particularly those which are most vulnerable.

- 9.8 To develop and implement an accredited training programme, available to all Churches, which will support the implementation of improved security systems.
- 9.9 To put in place improved practical security in the most vulnerable Churches in the << Name>> Diocese
- 9.10 To achieve improved response levels from Police in connection with offences against Churches, ministers and all related people.

10 ACTION PLAN

- 10.1 The Diocese to offer specific personal safety training courses to clergy to reduce violence and the fear of violence
- 10.2 Improvements to data relating to Churches crime to be instigated by Police, in the first place by interrogating the ICJS database.
- 10.3 Variations in key definitions between Police and Fire Service to be identified.
- 10.4 Under reporting of crime to be studied by the << Name>> Diocese, with initial focus on violence and Arson.
- 10.5 A common proforma for the reporting of all offences to Churches, ministers, congregations or visitors to be designed and distributed to all Churches in the Diocese.
- 10.6 To organise regular crime seminars in association with the << Name>>shire Constabulary and National Churchwatch to keep churches up to date with the latest crime reduction techniques.
- 10.7 An initiative to raise the awareness of the need to report crime will be taken forward by the << Name>> Diocese.
- 10.8 The development of a basic security system will be taken forward the Diocese in consultation with Ecclesiastical Insurance and National Churchwatch.
- 10.9 The exploration of different funding streams will be taken forward by the Diocese.
