

Safer places of Worship

Leaving the Place of Worship open

The decision on keeping your building locked or allowing unrestricted access by visitors is up to individual places of worship. Before any decision is made it is essential to discuss the matter with your insurer, who may require the building to remain locked when it is not in use.

The following is given to assist your decision:-

- Places of worship should ALWAYS be locked at night. This is an uncompromising piece of advice based upon the responsibility of society to seek to protect its heritage;
- Isolated buildings are more vulnerable than those with natural surveillance from surrounding occupied properties;
- Unlocked buildings are more vulnerable to theft and damage than locked ones;
- Places of worship which are left unlocked have a reduced risk of damage if an "official" is present at all times;
- Theft of property is less likely if valuables are removed to a secure place when not in use.



The options available, taking into account the above, are:-

- To leave the building open and unattended at all hours (which is not advised);
- To lock at night and leave unattended during the day;
- To lock at night and provide occasional attention during the day, perhaps using the attention of local residents or casual visits by members of the congregation;
- To lock at night and provide an attendant (perhaps on a rota system) at all times whilst open;
- To lock at night and encourage ways to make your place of worship subject to regular use during the day;

The decision is yours, but please, keep your community police officer informed of what you are doing, and again be warned that leaving the premises open and unattended renders the risk of theft and damage more likely.

If you decide that your place of worship is to be kept open during the day, you should always ensure that valuables, if not removed from the building, are locked away in a secure area which is protected by doors fitted with good quality locks and a security alarm