



## Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust

*Supporting Oxfordshire's Churches since 1964*

**From the Chairman** Basil Eastwood CMG  
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*Dear OHCT Member,*

I am writing to seek your support for our urgent campaign to fit alarms to protect the roofs of some of Oxfordshire's most iconic churches.

Since the middle of this year well-organised gangs of thieves have stolen lead from the roofs of 20 churches in Oxfordshire, including for example the wonderful churches at Ewelme, Bampton and Great Tew. This spate of lead thefts is continuing, but police resources are stretched to the limit.

Unfortunately since they did not have approved roof alarms these churches' insurance cover was very limited. We will help them repair their roofs. That has to be a priority for our existing resources. Once the rain gets in, the fabric of the building, its decoration and its contents will deteriorate very rapidly indeed. All the effort and resources which generations have devoted to maintaining a lovely building will quickly go to waste. We need to defend this investment.

However, simply repairing roofs is not an adequate response. We are therefore helping and encouraging the churches most at risk to fit roof alarms. The average cost of installing a roof alarm is some £4-5,000. Under our urgent programme we hope to pay 50% of this installation cost for the churches most at risk. Our colleagues in Suffolk mounted a similar campaign last year. Lead thefts there have now more or less ceased. Approved alarms are a virtually 100% effective deterrent.

Our trustees have decided to devote £30,000 to kick-start this programme. This £30,000 represents the entire first year's income from our new endowment Heritage Fund but it will only be enough for some twelve alarm systems, and we believe that about 150 churches in Oxfordshire may want to take part in our programme. We therefore need to raise £300,000 to make this possible. We have applied to a number of grantmaking foundations and are hopeful that they will support us. However, their procedures take time and since we launched the programme last month there are already applications in the pipeline that will exceed our £30,000. That's why we need your help.

Our churches are integral to the character of the county we love. They are usually central to the communities they serve and are increasingly used for secular functions as well as worship. Those with lead roofs are under imminent threat.

It is a race against time. We want to get most of the work done before Christmas. Our campaign is a really practical response. I do hope that you can support it. I attach a donation form.

Thank you.

*Yours sincerely  
Basil Eastwood*

**Patrons:** Tim Stevenson OBE, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire; Bernard Taylor DL; Sir Hugo Brunner KCVO

**President:** The Rt Rev Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester

**Hon. Secretary:** Jonathan Scheele, 20 Portland Road, Oxford OX2 7EY

**Tel:** 01865 435076 • **Email:** secretary@ohct.org.uk

Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (2016) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered as Charity No. 1168567

**[www.ohct.org.uk](http://www.ohct.org.uk)**



**CHURCH ROOF ALARM CAMPAIGN**

I enclose my cheque for £.....payable to OHCT

Name.....

Address.....  
.

Email address.....

*If you pay UK income tax or capital gains tax, please sign the Gift Aid Declaration below. This increases the value of your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you.*

**I want to GiftAid this donation and any donations I may make in the future or have made in the past four years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that it is my responsibility to pay the difference, if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of GiftAid claimed on all my donations in that tax year. I will inform the Trust if I wish to cancel this declaration, if I change my name or home address or if I no longer pay sufficient tax on my income or capital gains.**

Signed .....

Date .....\_

***Please send this form with your cheque to  
Stephen Dawson, OHCT Roof Alarm Appeal, The Knoll,  
Chiselhampton, Oxon OX44 7XA***