

Lead Theft – an update

20 November 2018

Rural parishes are being asked to be extra vigilant after a TV news programme highlighted the profitability of a recent spate of lead thefts from churches in the Diocese and warned the thefts are on the increase.

The Venerable Dr Sue Groom, the Archdeacon of Wiltshire said: “It was good to see Sky News highlighting the devastation caused to small rural communities by the theft of lead from church roofs. However in doing so they have raised awareness that such thefts could be lucrative! Please be extra vigilant in the coming weeks.”

Metal thefts from churches have increased by a third in the past two years, with an average of 37 incidents every month in the UK.

The programme featured the 13th century Church of St Michael's in Tidcombe where fundraisers, who had just reached their total for much needed roof repairs, have been left devastated after thieves stole 20 tonnes of lead. The roof was not insured.

In Baydon, a few days after the theft in Tidcombe, lead was stolen from the roof of the church of St Nicholas, leaving around £35,000 of damage. Parishioners there are trying to raise half a million pounds for repairs.

The programme highlighted the amount stolen lead can fetch and how there is no requirement under the law for scrapyards to ask where metal brought for sale has come from.