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## Brave churchwarden takes a stand to foil burglary attempt

by Mark Miseldine

**A CHURCH break-in was foiled and the intruder sent packing, thanks to the brave actions of a local churchwarden.**

Adrian Vincent surprised the would-be burglar after the man had broken into All Saints Church in Woodham. He then pursued the intruder, who ran into nearby woodland, while giving directions to the police over his phone.

"My wife, who is more kind than me, is praying for the man that he sees the error of his ways," said Adrian. "While I am praying that he be brought to justice."

The break-in was foiled on Sunday night, 9 September. It followed several incidents of petty vandalism at the Woodham church.

"On the previous Monday night we had a stone thrown through the church hall window, smashing it and damaging the cooker inside. On the Friday night we had a flower pot smashed and a display stamped on. On the Saturday night we had a stone thrown smashing the patio window of the church room where our art exhibition was being held," Adrian said.

All Saints was exhibiting the work of local artists Richard Head and Niul Foat, as well as providing guided tours of the church as part of Heritage Open Days event.

"So, on the Sunday night I sat in the church room with the lights out, watching the porch which is illuminated by our security lights. I was particularly concerned to try and protect the church because of the art exhibition. Also, the church doesn't have the money to keep paying the excess on our insurance policy for repairs after every incident."

Around 8.30pm Adrian saw a man with dark hair, about 20 years old, 5ft 10in, with slim build and a yellow draw-string bag over his shoulders.

"He started looking for a stone, and I called 999. While I was on the phone to the police, he threw a



**FOILED A BURGLARY ATTEMPT – Churchwarden Adrian Vincent**

stone which smashed the outer pane of one of our other patio doors. He then threw another stone which broke the glass of our church door.

"He stepped through the door into the church and then saw me in the room on the phone. I said 'excuse me, I don't think you should be in here' and he jumped back through the broken door and ran off."



**EXPENSIVE – Some of the damage caused at All Saints Church**

"I followed after him, giving directions to the police on the phone. He ran off down the woodland path beside the church, which leads to the Sands pub, but I didn't have my torch with me and didn't want to follow

him through dark woodland."

The police arrived shortly after and took a statement, and arranged for the broken pane to be boarded up.

Thanks to Adrian's quick actions, the art exhibition and All

Saints Church remained open.

"We had plenty of visitors on Saturday. It was a successful event despite the vandalism and attempted burglary. I'm hoping that all this has now scared the man off," he said.