

Vigilant brings digital video to West Suffolk

St Edmundsbury Borough Council has upgraded to digital recording as part of a complete overhaul of its CCTV system.

CCTV technology has come a long way since 1994, when the Government launched a £30 million program to introduce CCTV in towns and cities nationwide. Eleven years on, age has finally caught up with many local authority CCTV systems, prompting local authorities to replace old CCTV equipment with the very latest video surveillance technology.

Among them is St Edmundsbury Borough Council, which has spent £258,000 on upgrading its entire public space CCTV system. As part of the upgrade, funded by council income from car parking fees collected over several years, the council has replaced its old analog video recording system with a digital video recording solution from Vigilant Technology.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council covers an area of West Suffolk that includes the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and has one of the lowest crime rates in the country, partly thanks to the council's 48-camera CCTV system, which recently enjoyed its 10th anniversary.

Anne Baker, Support Services Manager at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, who is responsible for the council's CCTV system, says: **"Our analog video recording system was installed in 1995 and was very good when it was put in but it was due for replacement. So it made sense to upgrade to digital recording."**

Anne considered several digital video recording systems before deciding to trial two systems alongside each other in her CCTV control room. The winner of the trial was a solution utilizing Vigilant's Xstream recording servers, which provides full frame rate recording for all spot monitor positions in the control room and background recording of all the town center cameras; some at quarter frame rate and some at half frame rate with a 28 days recording cycle to hard disk storage.

"I had already seen the Vigilant system at Stevenage Borough Council and I was impressed with what I saw," recalls Anne. **"The trial confirmed that the Vigilant system was the right one for our control room. Vigilant have been really good at delivering what we've wanted and the clarity of digital footage recorded by their system is excellent."**

Digital video recording has made it so much easier for Anne and her team to review video footage. **"Before we went digital, we had to put a video tape in a VCR and trawl through the footage to find what we were looking for, which was such a long-winded process,"** she reflects. **"With digital, we simply enter the time and date of the period we want to review and the system instantly takes us there."** The PC-based digital recording system also makes it easier for Anne to pass video evidence onto the police: **"We can now copy CCTV footage onto CD or email images to police stations, which enables the police to take action much more quickly than before, while enabling us to retain a copy of the footage,"** says Anne.

The system has also freed up valuable space in Anne's CCTV control room. She says: **"We used to have a wall full of video tapes, but now we store video footage on CDs, which take up far less space."**

Global MSC Security managed the project to upgrade St Edmundsbury Borough Council's new CCTV system, while Quadrant Video Systems installed all the equipment. **"The working relationship between Vigilant, Quadrant and Global MSC has been great,"** says Anne. **"We held many site meetings and Vigilant were happy to come to several of them, which helped make the project easier to manage."**

Vigilant's wide area networking capability is fully utilized within this project. Recording servers located in Haverhill capture images from the town center and reside in a Vigilant wide area network, achieved using a BT data line linking the Bury St. Edmunds control room. Operators can therefore review recordings from the remote location in the same way as those cameras terminating in the central control room.

Anne now plans to link the neighbouring Forest Heath District Council to St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Vigilant system to digitally record CCTV footage from Forest Heath's three main towns: Brandon, Newmarket and Mildenhall. For local authority CCTV schemes, the digital revolution continues apace.

About Vigilant

Vigilant Technology, a BATM Company, is a global leading provider of intelligent IP surveillance and security solutions. The company offers a turn key solution including video servers, DVR/NVRs, intelligent real-time video content analysis and sophisticated, proactive control center solutions. Vigilant has a worldwide customer base and is globally supporting tens of thousands of cameras in airports, governmental sites, financial institutions, correctional facilities, casinos, city centers, and more.