

POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL CRACKS DOWN ON CRIME

Powys County Council has comprehensively upgraded its security systems at depots around the county in order to discourage trespass and theft. With the installation of Vista ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras and Dedicated Micros DVRs, all vehicles can now be recorded entering and leaving the site, providing the police with valuable information should an incident occur.

The Council is a Welsh Unitary Authority responsible for all local government services in the county, including education, social care services, roads and bridges, leisure services, tourism and planning. It employs around 8,000 staff working in many locations across the county in a wide variety of roles. The Council has a huge impact on the local economy, both by being its largest employer and by spending more than half of its £300 million turnover within the county's boundaries.

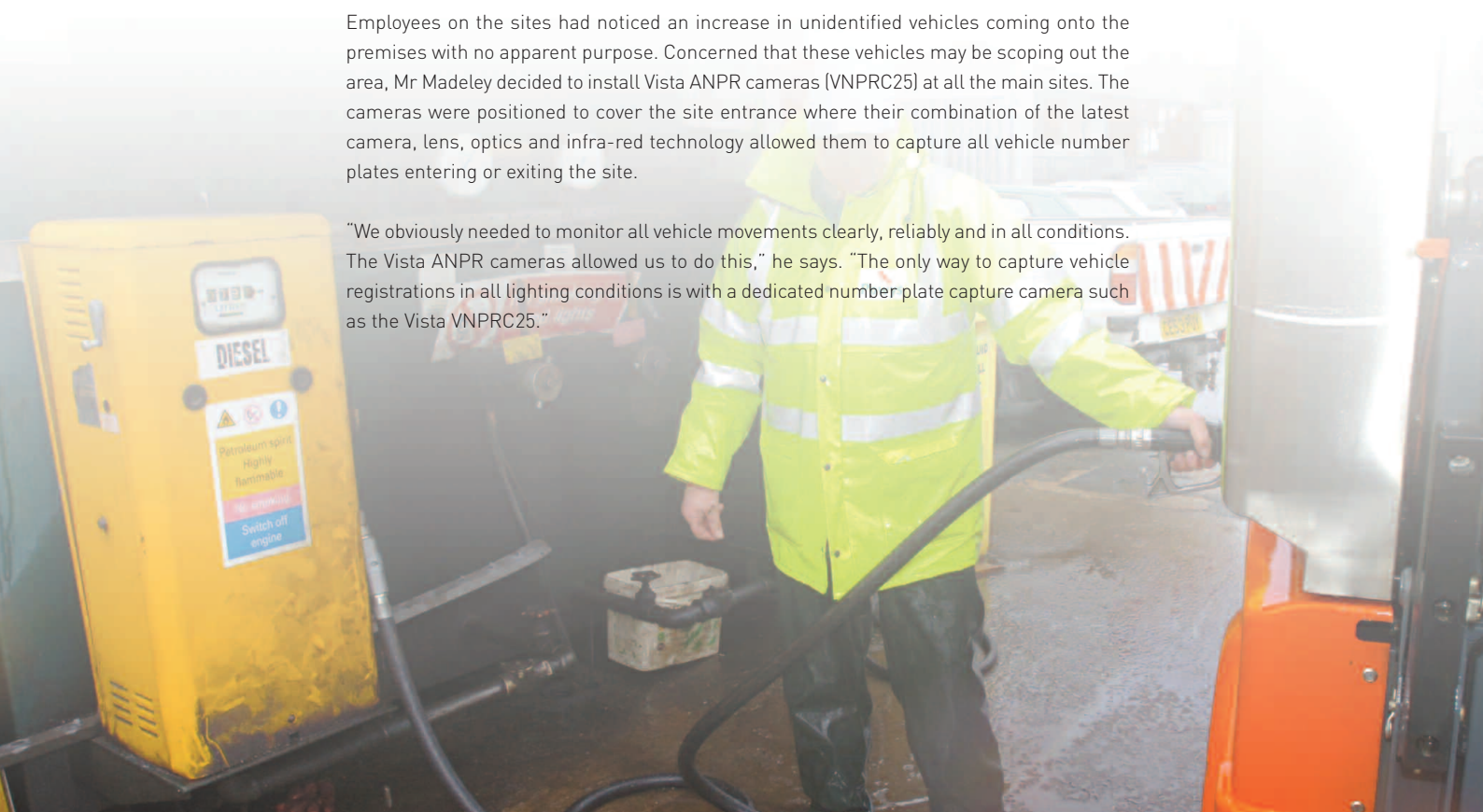
Powys is an extensive, largely upland and extremely rural county covering 2000 square miles – about a quarter of the area of Wales. With only one person in every ten acres it is one of the most sparsely populated local authority areas in England and Wales.

Being such a large county, the depots used to store vehicles and equipment are often in relatively isolated locations and, although crime is reasonably low in the area, this left them vulnerable to break-in and theft. A spate of recent incidents at the depots involving vehicles, tools and fuel suggested that these weren't just the actions of opportunists, but rather those of organised criminals. Clearly, a security solution was required.

Tim Madeley, Electrical Technician at Powys County Council, had the responsibility of finding an appropriate solution to the problem. Mr Madeley drew on his six years of experience in the CCTV and security industry when specifying the systems to be installed.

Employees on the sites had noticed an increase in unidentified vehicles coming onto the premises with no apparent purpose. Concerned that these vehicles may be scoping out the area, Mr Madeley decided to install Vista ANPR cameras (VNPRC25) at all the main sites. The cameras were positioned to cover the site entrance where their combination of the latest camera, lens, optics and infra-red technology allowed them to capture all vehicle number plates entering or exiting the site.

"We obviously needed to monitor all vehicle movements clearly, reliably and in all conditions. The Vista ANPR cameras allowed us to do this," he says. "The only way to capture vehicle registrations in all lighting conditions is with a dedicated number plate capture camera such as the Vista VNPRC25."



The cameras allowed workers to keep an eye on all unknown vehicles. If they were suspicious, they could check the footage and take note of the registration numbers. If there was a subsequent break-in, the information could be handed over to the police to aid their investigations. Looking to the future, the cameras could be linked into automated barriers that would automatically open when an authorised vehicle approached.

Installers Security Wise Ltd were brought in to handle the installation. "We've a long history working with the Council," says Security Wise's specifier, John Evans. "In accordance with the County Councils requirements, our NSI Gold approval ensured very high levels of technical and managerial experience. This gives them peace of mind and ensures that we handle all the jobs efficiently and effectively."

The Vista ProtosIV colour/mono cameras specified to provide an overview of the sites, provide full day/night, high resolution images. As with the Vista ANPR cameras, they provided the council with the quality, cost effective, high resolution images they required.

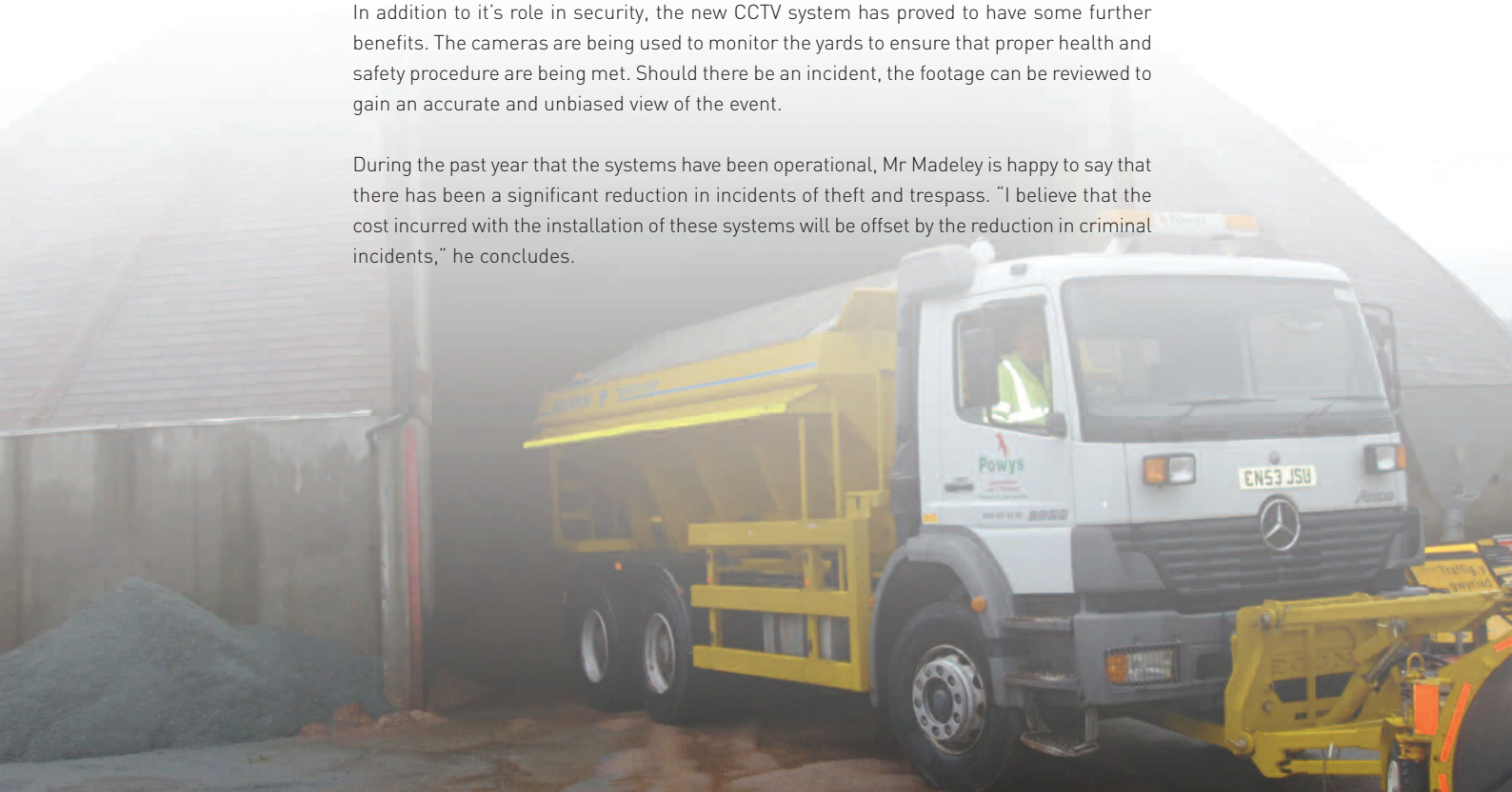
Along with the Vista cameras, Mr Madeley was keen to use Dedicated Micros (DM) DVRs. "I've had a lot of experience with DM recorders in the past," he explains. "They have excellent features, and have proved to be reliable." 16 way (DS2A16DVD-320GB) and 9 way (DS2A9DVD-320GB) DVRs were selected depending on the size of the site.

"We required a good quality system that gave us scope for expansion when required," says Mr Madeley. "The DM recorders allow us to archive images to DVD and are fully networkable. We can also control fully functional domes via the coax telemetry and our central station can monitor our sites via the video transmission."

For Security Wise, there was no question as to whom they would use to supply the CCTV equipment. "We've been using Norbain for many years and are continually impressed by their level of technical support and by their delivery times," says Bob Keen, Operations Manager. "We know we can always rely on them to get us the equipment that's needed, when it's needed. You can't ask for more than that from a supplier."

In addition to its role in security, the new CCTV system has proved to have some further benefits. The cameras are being used to monitor the yards to ensure that proper health and safety procedure are being met. Should there be an incident, the footage can be reviewed to gain an accurate and unbiased view of the event.

During the past year that the systems have been operational, Mr Madeley is happy to say that there has been a significant reduction in incidents of theft and trespass. "I believe that the cost incurred with the installation of these systems will be offset by the reduction in criminal incidents," he concludes.



About Security Wise Ltd

Formed in 1984, Security Wise Ltd are nationally recognised for the design, provision, installation and maintenance of security systems engineered to a very high quality and exacting standards.

The company brings together specialist skills and knowledge to supply comprehensive bespoke systems for domestic and commercial properties regardless of their size or complexity. They can design, install and maintain CCTV systems for any application and guarantee that the service offered by their expanding surveillance division incorporates the very latest security technology to meet their customer's budget.

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