

CCTV gives Gosport Ferry a smooth ride

Norbain SD has supplied a CCTV and Access Control system to Gosport Ferry Ltd to ensure the safety and peace of mind of its staff and customers, both at the ports and on its boats. The system has proved to be a great deterrent and has provided Gosport Ferry with some unexpected advantages.



Gosport Ferry Ltd. has a long and proud tradition of service to the local communities. In its heyday the ferry carried nearly 10 million passengers a year across Portsmouth Harbour. Today, passenger numbers are around 4 million, but the Gosport Ferry remains by far the busiest short route ferry service in the country.

The company had a basic CCTV system but wanted to upgrade it to monitor passengers, crew and employees on the ferries and the pontoons, with the facility to record any issue that may arise. Gardner Security Ltd was bought in to assess the situation, recommend the best course of action, and carry out the install. "We chose Gardner Security because of their excellent knowledge and proactive attitude to the installation," says Captain Paul Bryant, General Manager of Gosport Ferry. "Additionally, other companies were looking to charge exorbitant maintenance charges, but Gardner had the best attitude toward service."

Gardner decided to install two Vista vandal resistant static domes on each of the ferries – one monitoring the entrance way and the other the seating area. Gosport Ferry may look to expand this set up in the near future to include the cycle decks. One unexpected benefit Captain Bryant has discovered is the ability to monitor customer movements in order to improve customer service. "By knowing how our customers use the space on the ferries and pontoons, we can better provide for their needs," he explains. "Although we didn't install the cameras for this purpose, it's been a great additional benefit."





Vista Protos^{IV} day/night cameras have been positioned on the Portsmouth and Gosport pontoons to monitor any activity, especially at night. The Protos cameras were chosen because of their high performance and flexibility. "There's always an issue with reflections when you work near the water," explains Mr. Darren Sheppard, General Manager of Gardner Security Ltd. "We carried out a series of tests on the cameras before we installed them to determine their suitability. They passed with flying colours." Mr Sheppard was also impressed with the flexibility of the range. "As well as the usual functions you'd expect to find on this type of camera, the ability to set up the cameras according to the environment made them the best choice for the job."

Protos^{IV} cameras have been installed in the workshops, both internally and externally to help secure the area and prevent items being removed. "There was an incident immediately prior to the install," says Mr Sheppard. "But there have been no

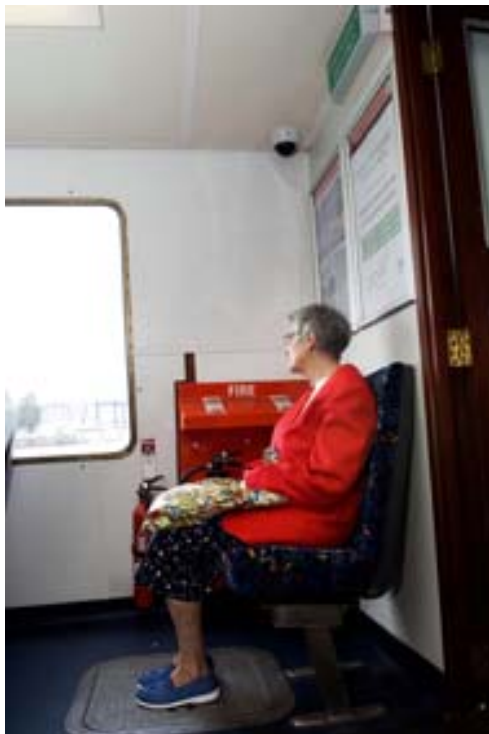
problems since everything's been up and running." These cameras also monitor the dockside where ferries are docked for maintenance and repair. An additional camera is trained on the gate to record the number plates of all vehicles entering the site. This camera is set up so that the vehicle is 50% of screen height and the footage can then be reviewed and registration numbers handed over to the Police if an incident occurs.

Another Protos^{IV} camera is trained on the ticket office window in Gosport and on the ticket machines in Portsmouth. Vandal resistant wedge housings were required as the cameras are positioned at a relatively low height to ensure the best view of each person's face as they walk through the barriers. Finally, a Vista MiniDome has been placed inside the cash office to monitor cash counting and any movement around the safe.

All images from the pontoons and ticket offices are received on DM 320-600GB Sprite DVRs and viewed on Vista TFT flat screen monitors. "There's not a great deal of spare space in the ticket offices or on the bridge of the ferries, so the flat screen monitors were a great solution for us," comments Mr Sheppard. "The image quality is great as well, so we don't feel that we needed to make any compromises to save on the space."



Paxton Access readers have been installed at the ticket and cash offices and are linked to the on-site PC. Because of the planned expansion and continuing development of the site, a network to link up the CCTV and Access Control systems is being considered.



All the equipment was supplied via Norbain SD Ltd. "Working with Norbain has been fantastic," enthuses Mr Sheppard. "We were using another distributor, but the equipment was poor and the service even worse. Performance is paramount in this business and the quality of back up is essential. Norbain give us excellent technical advice whenever we need it and their ordering policy means that we can order today and receive the goods tomorrow."

While working on the project, Gardner Security was faced with a number of challenges. Because of the lighting used along the sea front and the high vehicles used to maintain it, they weren't able to install a catenary wire from the pontoons over which to run the cables. Nor were they able to bury them as the whole area has been newly paved as part of the Council's regeneration programme. This meant that a solution was required that did not rely on wires to transmit the information to the control room.

Initially, Gardner Security tried omni directional and then directional radio links to transmit the information. Although a strong, clear picture was initially received with both methods, the signal was then lost completely. After further investigation, Gardner discovered that this was due to external radio interference from the shipping and other harbour transmissions. There were a number of options available, however microwave technology was the best option to overcome the problems, allowing clear images to be reliably transmitted and received.

Running the cabling through the boats also needed a special solution. When the ignitions are started, a spike is sent through the electrics, which needs to be filtered out. To solve this, the cables were correctly housed and shielded and the routes carefully separated from other high voltage cables. Also, the cameras had to be installed in such a way that the vibration of the boats didn't cause picture distortion. The Vista vandal resistant domes coped with the changing levels of vibration on the ferries, and the changing power provisions.



Ever unpredictable in the UK, weather conditions added an element of their own to the installation. There are a number of health and safety issues that need to be taken into consideration when working on pontoons that are moving with the waves and being lashed with rain. Climbing gear and life jackets were essential for the safety of the team.

Gardner Security doesn't just carry out the installations, they offer a value-added service that builds unique relationships with their clients and provides an ongoing managed solution to the customers' ever-changing needs. Because of these services, Gardner Security has become an indispensable part of the Gosport Ferry team.

Gardner Security has created a policy document on CCTV and its use within the port. "This is a very important part of the process," explains Mr Sheppard. "It's a proactive approach advising what to do in the case of an incident, what they can and can't do with the images, and what the issues around data protection are." This last point, he explains, is very important because, if the images aren't used in a responsible and legal manner, they may become inadmissible as evidence and leaves the customer liable to criminal and civil prosecution. It doesn't end there; Gardner Security is continually reviewing the system to ensure that it continues to meet the port's needs. If improvements can be made, a suggestion is put forward and the system is enhanced accordingly.

"Gardner Security has been great to work with and has done an excellent job. As promised, there was little or no disruption to our day to day business and they even finished ahead of schedule!" says Captain Bryant. "They have already been back to ensure that the system is correctly configured for our needs and provided some additional enhancements beyond our expectations. We are delighted with the service and are confident that we will continue to reap rewards from our ongoing relationship with Gardner Security."

About Gardner Security

Since 1981 Gardner Security has been providing security and fire systems to homes and businesses throughout the southern Home Counties, and are currently maintaining thousands of systems that they have installed.

Gardner Security adheres to the latest European codes of practice and holds the NSI Gold Medal for recognition of outstanding performance in CCTV, Access Control and Intruder Alarms.

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