



Case study | January 2021

Modern security solutions for a historic town

How one British town went from abandoning forensic searches to completing them in a matter of minutes.

SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Soham Town Council

Soham, an ancient English town dating back to the Stone Age, is located within the District of East Cambridgeshire, sitting close to Cambridge, approximately one hour northeast of London. Unlike Higher Tier Authorities such as District and County Councils, which act in matters such as refuse, planning education, and highways, the Soham Town Council is a first-tier Local Authority. It is focused more on providing residents value-added social benefits, including improving their welfare and safety.

Soham Town Council comprises 15 elected representatives from a community of 22,000 residents of its community, and a qualified Clerk together with several full and part-time staff members.

The town has maintained CCTV cameras for many decades. In recent years it had not only agreed to overhaul the out of date physical hardware but look into AI software to replace/to overcome the known limitations imposed by more traditional data handling software.

Soham town council decided that it was time to investigate and invest in a modern update to its video surveillance security services.

Industry
Local government

Founded as a town
from a village

1983

Number of residents

Approx. 22,000

Town size

24 km²

The challenges

Soham Town Council worked with outdated equipment, including CCTV cameras, older servers, and limited recordings to review past incidents. Many of the cameras were poorly placed. With no proactive maintenance being done for several years, recorded material only covered a few hours of footage before being recorded over. After an incident would occur, a staff member needed to sit through hours of footage at low resolution, which took days at a time to often find nothing of value. When operators found recorded incidents, they copied the footage and sent it by hand to the proper authorities using a bulky hard drive or other physical devices. The process created delays leading to slow and often no follow-up in investigations and invariably frustration and complaint.

As only nine of the 17 installed cameras were working, the town no longer had visibility to all public spaces along the main street. Of those working cameras, the video's quality was low due to the cameras' extended age. The town council decided that they needed a better way to keep their residents safe and accelerate investigations with an upgraded video surveillance solution.

The solution

This small bustling town used an outdated CCTV system that was no longer fit for this council's diverse needs. The new solution needed to be flexible, high-performing, and at the same time, cost-efficient since municipalities are generally confronted with shrinking budgets.

Soham was looking to achieve the following with a new video surveillance system:

- Surveillance on all areas of their main street
- High-quality video footage
- Camera firmware and software that operators could upgrade more easily

- Searchable features for rule violation evidence
- Improved way to handle chain-of-custody in investigations
- Generous storage of video footage accessible remotely

Along with this list of needs, some customization of the product was also necessary to fulfill the optimal quality desired by Soham's council. Ava's flexible system and products integrated well with preexisting cameras and tools while also enhancing the possibilities of both. Ava Aware was able to pick up on distinguishable characteristics and new details to streamline police reports. It also became easier to protect the town's regulations and investigate offenses

Products used



1 Ava Appliances 1000



Ava Aware video management system



34 external cameras

In partnership with



Accurate forensics within minutes

The A1000 appliance is optimized for Aware and easily connects with pre-existing cameras. Soham's administrative team could access, search, and analyze faster and increase investigations' speed by 98%



Excellent customer service and attention to detail

With each request made by Soham's town council, their Ava representative was there to adjust the platform settings and liaise between service providers needed to make the system more suitable to Soham's needs.



Continuous growth and upgrades

Soham's town council appreciated Ava Aware's flexibility as it easily integrated with their existing cameras with considerable growth potential. Ava's software upgrades will keep their video surveillance system protected from cyber threats and always updated with the latest features



The possibilities of this system are only limited to what you want to do with them.

– Dianne Marshall, Clerk and Financial Officer, Soham Town Council

The result

As a town council, Soham must answer to its residents. They took a great leap of faith in investing in an entirely new system for their town. With their commitment to securing their community and a little assistance from Ava experts, the results have already started to pay off.

Before finding Ava, the Soham town council's employees spent hours searching through video footage to prepare an investigative report. The extensive time needed to find an incident or culprit on poor-quality footage took away from their other duties. With the Ava Aware video management system's [Smart Search™ capability](#), it is now possible to quickly search through recorded events to find the necessary evidence. Soham is increasingly more proactive in monitoring unusual or unwanted events and behaviors such as illegal handicapped parking, physical violence, petty theft, fly-tipping or illegal dumping, and other criminal offenses. Quickly finding and creating evidence to these offenses allows Soham the potential to generate new revenue that was not easily attainable before the installation of Ava Aware.

Due to Ava's machine learning system, Soham receives alerts any time one of these abnormal events occurs, making the employees more aware and better able to act quickly upon potential violations. The use of 'alerts' replaces the traditional monitoring needed with dedicated staff for "real-time reporting." Soham is now able to respond to offenses and prevent them from escalating. While the system works well in their designated locations, they are still only as strong as their location, which is why Soham is looking to expand its reach and go beyond the main street throughout their town. Soham's forward-thinking approach and installation of Ava Aware is well aligned with their continued plans to keep this town, its residents, and visitors safe and happy.

4

Working hours saved daily

3

fly-tipping incidents recorded since installation



New revenue stream potential



The scalability of the Ava system is a huge advantage. We believe we will be the yardstick for what other town councils will do, and there is the potential to create a nationwide net with this system.

– Dianne Marshall, Clerk and Financial Officer, Soham Town Council



Ava is a global technology company with offices in the UK, Norway, and the USA. We exist because we believe that we can create a better, smarter way to deliver security.

We inject intelligence into our approach to security and all our solutions. We help organizations see, understand, and act on their surroundings to protect their people, business, and reputation in realtime.

We founded Ava Cyber in 2016 and Ava Video in 2018 and the two companies merged in 2020 to become a unified security provider with extensive capital investment from Ubon Partners.

To learn more about our innovative solutions, and how you can enjoy proactive security, visit our website or schedule a demo with a member of our sales team at: sales@ava.uk.

www.ava.uk