



Wycombe Deanery Plan

2021 – 2025

Serving our Fellowships
Shaping our Future
Spurring on our Friends
Sharing the Fire

Wycombe Deanery Plan

Deanery Verse

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,
for he who promised is faithful.
And let us consider how we may spur one another on
toward love and good deeds,
not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,
but encouraging one another—
and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)

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What is a Deanery?

A Deanery is the geographical subdivision between a Diocese and a Parish. In a Deanery, parishes are grouped together so they can work together to see God's kingdom come. The Deanery is the servant of the parishes.

A Deanery is not:

- a big parish: it does not aim to have a worshipping or missional life outside the churches it serves and it takes care to enhance and not to displace the life of local churches.
- a small Diocese: it does not have its own resources of money or staff to deploy – its only resources are those freely given by the local churches.

We aim to...

be largely invisible to the public
enable growth
provide structures that help
increase faith in what God is doing

...so our churches can

be more visible in their communities
grow and flourish as God intends
be free to do the work of the kingdom
be encouraged to play their unique part

Our Mission

To play our part in the Great Commission

Our Vision

To see the churches of Wycombe Deanery flourishing individually, working effectively together and contributing to the renewal of the wider church.

The Great Commission

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

Matthew 28:19-20

Our Four Deanery Values

† **Serving our Fellowships**

† **Shaping our Future**

† **Spurring on our Friends**

† **Sharing the Fire**

1. Serving our Fellowships

The Deanery exists not to be served but to serve. Our success or failure is bound up in the flourishing of our 35 churches.

Serving our Fellowships means:

- Always seeking the good of each parish
- Focussing on people and right relationships, not buildings or structures
- Acting in a collaborative and mutually supportive way

We therefore aim to:

- Listen before speaking
- Value and nurture the identity of each church, seeking unity in diversity
- Identify ways to support each church
 - Individually – e.g. during vacancy or other need
 - Together – e.g. by sharing best practice

We will prioritise:

- Supporting the leaders of each parish: clergy, licensed ministers, wardens and treasurers, bringing prayer, encouragement and challenge as needed
- Acting as an effective link between Diocese and Parish
- Identifying practical means of support and offering them to churches as a gift

2. Shaping our Future

We believe that – under God – the future of our churches lies in our hands. We do not expect our Diocesan or National church leaders to turn around the fortunes of our churches or to bail us out with historic financial resources.

Shaping our Future means:

- Taking responsibility for the future of our Deanery
- Proactive long-term planning for growth
- Bold and realistic plans for short / medium-term sustainability

We therefore aim to:

Produce a Deanery Plan that will:

- Achieve sustainable clergy deployment
- Create an environment that makes it easier for churches to flourish
- Maximise the benefits of working together and minimize administrative burdens

We will prioritise:

- Creating and following a Deanery Plan that will help to enable the flourishing of our churches
- Proactively considering the long-term future and responding with Spirit-led strategies that will bless our churches and their communities

3. Spurring on our Friends

We are not competitors. We are family. We celebrate when others flourish and we mourn together when one church suffers pain or loss.

Spurring on our Friends means:

- Exploring new ways to grow in love and in our calling
- Enabling parishes to work better together
- Learning from each other and identifying fruitful partnerships
- Supporting, unifying and inspiring

We will therefore aim to:

- Make Chapter and Synod places where we spur one another on as friends
- Support the wellbeing of all leaders especially clergy, lay readers, churchwardens and treasurers
- Excel in Deanery communication
- Work with parishes in vacancy to help them continue to flourish and to discover the new leader God is sending to them

We will prioritise:

- Leading a change of culture across the Deanery, starting in Chapter and Synod
- Bringing a greater sense of unity, wellbeing and hope and establishing the Deanery as a place in which to be inspired by learning from others
- Continuous improvement of our communication
- Providing outstanding support to parishes in vacancy

4. Sharing the Fire

We sense God is doing something new in our Deanery and across the nation. Over the past few years a new generation of church leaders has arrived in our Deanery and brought fresh vision and a willingness to work together. We believe this is a work of the Holy Spirit and want to embrace it wholeheartedly.

Sharing the Fire means:

- Exercising the gift of discernment to identify where the Holy Spirit's fire is burning
- Drawing attention to where the Spirit is at work, and encouraging it to spread
- Going with the flow of what God is doing, rather than trying to spread resources and attention according to our own agenda.
- Shifting focus away from our own internal church needs to move outwards in mission
- Laying down our desires to protect and provide for ourselves, and generously Sharing the Fire – whatever it costs us

We will therefore aim to:

- Identify and celebrate the Fire of the Spirit – wherever we see it
- Give ourselves to joining in with what God is already doing, not trying to create momentum through human effort
- Add fuel to the Fire and then share it as the primary mean of growth, rather than trying to coax smouldering embers back into life

We will prioritise:

- Focussing when we gather on what God is doing around the Deanery
- Organising inspiring and encouraging events that embody "Sharing the Fire" to follow on from our inaugural event in October 2019
- "Sharing the Fire" with our wider communities

Our Diocese

A more Christ-like Church - contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Common Vision

Oxford Diocese has a "Common Vision" for life together. This is the framework within which we dwell and which connects us to the wider church in this nation and worldwide.

Our world is changing in new and unprecedented ways; we must think afresh about inequality, our communities, and what it means to be human. We need to be the best Church we can be in such a time as this: a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world.

We are not the society for the preservation of old buildings (important though our heritage assets are). We believe that a church is the community of God's people, not the building. We believe that becoming more Christ-like is about who we are called to be, not what we're called to do.

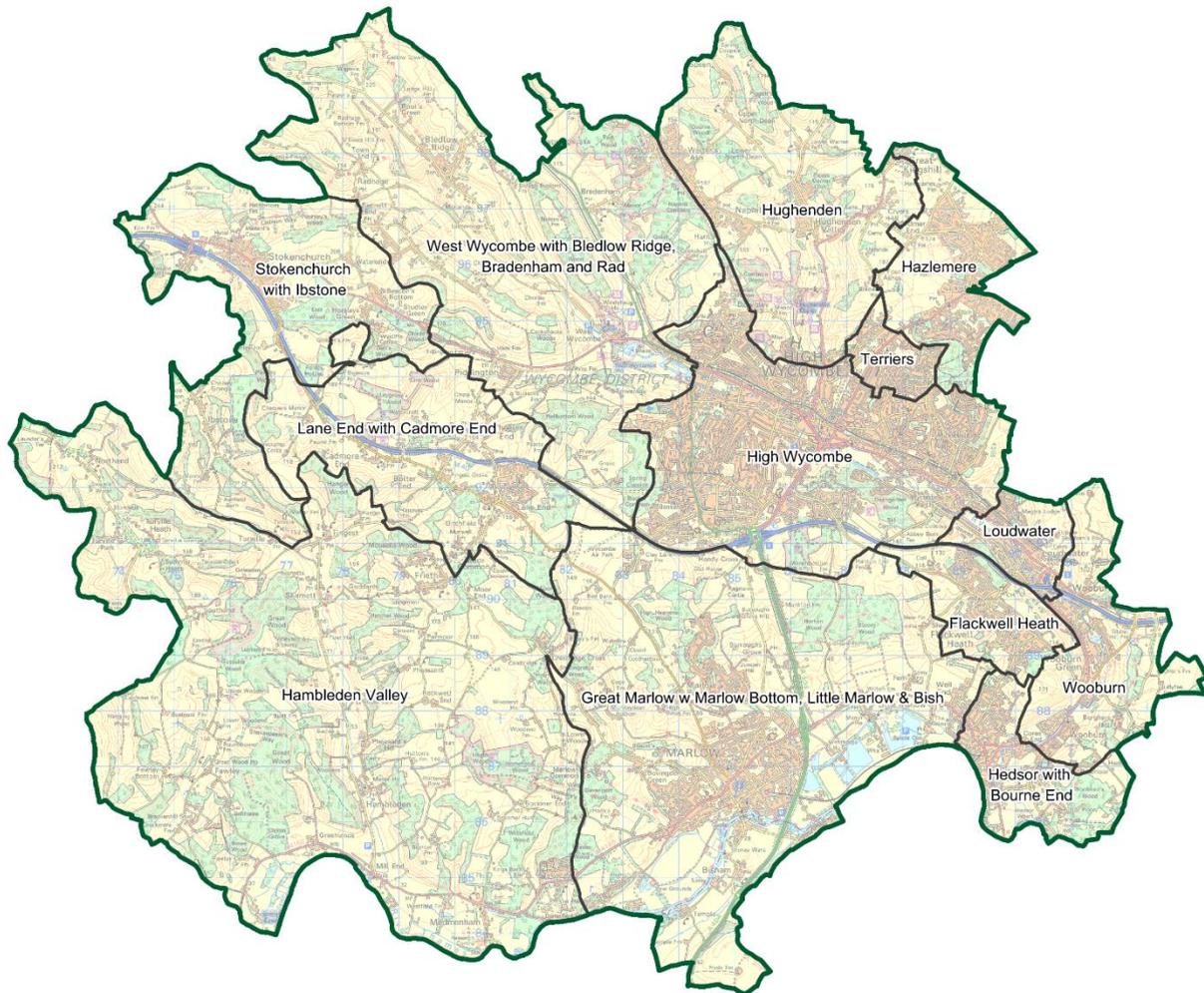
This is our common vision for every Christian in every church and every school across this Diocese. We want to discern what God is already doing in our communities and figure out how best we can join in.

The call to become more Christ-like, to sit at the feet of the Lord, is not the preliminary work we need to do before a new corporate strategy and a five-year plan. This is our vision and this is our strategy. It is the response we are called to make. We are continually adapting and reshaping our common vision as, together, we discern God's will.

How Diocese & Deanery work together

Oxford has 29 Deaneries and – compared to other Dioceses – delegates a great deal of freedom to the Deanery leadership. For example, we are free to deploy Parish Share and clergy posts as we think best serves the Deanery. We are also given a great deal of encouragement and support to experiment and try new things. Our Area Bishop and Archdeacon create an encouraging and permissive environment for which we are very grateful. We aspire to be a blessing to them also.

How does the Deanery work?



Wycombe Deanery comprises 35 churches in 26 parishes. A full list can be found at www.wycombedeanery.com/churches

Who leads the the Deanery and how does it work?

Overall leadership of the Deanery is provided by:

Area Dean	Rev'd Canon Dave Bull	Lay Chair	Graeme Slocombe
Associate Area Dean	Rev'd Hugh Ellis	Associate Lay Chair	Doral Hayes
Associate Area Dean	Rev'd Keith Johnson	Synod Secretary	Mark Moorcraft

Deanery Employees

Deanery Administrator	Debbie Leach
Discipleship Training Centre (Leader)	Charlotte Lawson
Discipleship Training Centre (Operations)	Charlie Brown

The Deanery is led by 4 main groups:

1. Deanery Synod

Synod is like the PCC for the Deanery. Its members are:

- All the clergy who are licensed by the bishop to serve in the Deanery (plus some representing retired clergy who have Permission to Officiate).
- About 60 representatives elected from the parishes every 3 years (the number from each parish is proportional to the number on the electoral roll).

Synod is led by the Lay Chair and Area Dean. It meets 4 times each year in order to:

- pray for the life of the Deanery churches
- encourage one another by hearing about what God is doing in our churches
- consider the challenges of mission and how we might respond to them
(these first 3 items take up a minimum of 50% of Synod meetings)
- consider plans for working together between parishes
- communicate well with Diocese, parishes and other organisations such as charities
- agree and oversee our financial plans

2. Deanery Chapter

Chapter is the gathering of clergy who serve in the Deanery. It includes chaplains, curates, retired clergy, associate clergy and incumbents. We gather together 4 times per year over lunchtime and we model our meetings on the Upper Room in the book of Acts. We build relationship with one another, we pray together and for each other, we discuss where we think the Lord is leading us. It is a very supportive group and is led by the Area Dean.

3. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee usually meets 4 times per year. It is responsible for:

- Planning our Synod meetings
- Keeping watch over our finances
- Organising the 3 yearly Church Inspections, ensuring every church receives a regular visit to check on the church, its contents and – most importantly – its people!

Current members:

Lay Chair (chair)

Graeme Slocombe

Area Dean

Dave Bull

Associate Area Deans

Hugh Ellis & Keith Johnson

Deanery Treasurer

Nigel Peach

Secretary

Debbie Leach

4. Mission & Pastoral Team

This is the main leadership team for the Deanery. It is responsible for our long-term strategy, the Deanery Plan and the management of clergy vacancies. Most of what you read in the rest of this plan is overseen by this group.

Current members:

Dave Bull	Area Dean (chair)
Graeme Slocombe	Lay Chair
Debbie Leach	Deanery Administrator (secretary)
Nick Cousins	All Saints High Wycombe
Nick Gallant	St Francis Terriers
Doral Hayes	St Paul's Wooburn
Caroline Sants	St Mary the Virgin, Turville
Rev'd Janet Binns	Bourne End & Hedsor
Rev'd Simon Dust	St Andrew's High Wycombe
Rev'd Mark Meardon	Holy Trinity Hazlemere
Rev'd Sue Morton	Hambleden Valley
Rev'd Graham Watts	The Lantern, Marlow Bottom
+ a Curate representative	

Purpose of the Deanery Plan

To bring into being our vision to see the churches of Wycombe Deanery flourishing individually, working effectively together and contributing to the renewal of the wider church.

Looking back – the last 5 years

The 2016-2020 The Deanery Plan combined:

- our **proactive long-term plans for growth** and
- our **bold and realistic plans for short / medium-term sustainability**

The main goals of the 2016-20 Deanery Plan were to:

1. Achieve sustainable clergy deployment
2. Respond to the needs revealed in Parish Plans
3. Invest in what grows and then spread it

To achieve these goals, we identified 6 priorities:

- a. Growing a healthy culture of right relationships and a common spirit
- b. Freely sharing knowledge and experience
- c. Making good plans and communicating them clearly
- d. Forming mission focussed partnerships
- e. Deploying our resources effectively and sustainably to achieve these plans
- f. Ensuring that Synod (and its two subcommittees), Chapter, Parish Inspections, Chaplaincy and Church School partnerships and Vacancy planning are all aligned with these objectives and ways of working.

Key events during this period included:

- Recruitment of 11 new clergy through vacancies.
- Realignment of parishes & finances so that in most parishes the Share is now more sustainable. Parish Share has been paid at 100% in all five years.
- A reinvigoration of Chapter and Synod, both of which have seen significant increases in attendance and engagement
- The setting up of a Deanery Discipleship Training Centre based in Marlow, a Resource Church at St Andrew's High Wycombe and a Rural Review project involving 15 of our village churches.
- The "Sharing the Fire" event in October 2019, attended by 475 people from across the Deanery.
- Improvement of processes around Church Inspections, Clergy Vacancies and Communications.

Deanery Plan: Priorities for 2021-5

We will pursue these 6 priorities over the next 5 years of the Deanery's life:

- ✝ Sharing the Fire
- ✝ Wellbeing
- ✝ Rural Church
- ✝ New Leaders
- ✝ New Congregations
- ✝ Partnership

1. Sharing the Fire

The 'Sharing the Fire' event in October 2019 was a celebration of what God is doing in Wycombe Deanery and brought together:

- a significant number of interesting and exciting initiatives to share
- inspiring worship and testimony of God's power at work
- a focus on intercessory prayer
- the galvanizing presence of our Diocesan Bishop
- 475 ordinary members of Deanery churches

We want to answer the question – what next? How do we build on this inspiring event? What further actions could have a similar catalytic effect on the lives of our churches?

Among our current ideas are:

- A village "Sharing the Fire" event for rural churches
- A post-Lighthouse 'Sharing the Fire' at Adams Park
- Drawing in other Christians across the Deanery
- Keeping Chapter 'on fire' with the Spirit's presence
- 'Sharing the Fire' with newly elected members of Synod
- Involving other leadership groups

Project lead: Mission & Pastoral Team

2. Wellbeing

Ensuring the wellbeing of our leaders is critical to the flourishing of our churches. We are therefore committed to developing a network of supportive structures that make it as easy as possible for our leaders to find support and avoid burnout.

Furthermore we take it as a specific challenge to get better at noticing and acting on the early warning signs of difficulties arising in our parishes.

Our support structures will include:

- Weekly Deanery Morning Prayer on Zoom
- Quiet Days and Retreats
- St Katharine's Retreat Centre in Parmoor
- Locum / Emergency support for Deanery clergy from Mieke Gaynor
- Spiritual Direction
- Chapter meetings
- Deanery 'buddy' system for clergy
- Coaching / ministry accompaniment
- Access to Diocesan / National resources for wellbeing and healing
- Wellbeing support for Church Wardens

We take Diversity to be a central part of Wellbeing. To become a healthier Deanery our leaders need to grow to become more like Jesus and as a group to be more representative of those we serve, eliminating discrimination and unconscious bias wherever we become aware of it.

Project Leads: Sue Morton, Jo Gallant, Keith Johnson, Dave Bull

3. Rural Church

We have initiated a project to reimagine ministry for the 15 rural churches in our Deanery based in our 3 rural teams: West Wycombe, South Chilterns and Hambleton Valley. We have a once in a generation opportunity to reshape village church life in our Deanery.

The goal of this project is to:

- enable an intentional focus on mission and evangelism
- free up the time and energy of lay people and clergy to focus on mission and ministry
- realise, nurture and equip the ministry of lay people

Project Leads: Graeme Slocombe & Caroline Sants

4. New Leaders

We sense a call to become a leadership pipeline for the church. We believe Wycombe Deanery should be raising up young leaders not only for its own churches but as a resource for the wider church. We aim to create a culture that identifies, nurtures and commissions leaders to serve the whole of God's church.

Particular areas of focus are:

- Lay and ordained teamwork – we aim to create great teams of leaders who will model non-hierarchical leadership and keep a constant eye out for the leaders of the future. These teams include Area Dean & Lay Chair, the Mission & Pastoral Team, incumbents, wardens and those working on vacancy processes.
- Discipleship Training Centre – developing a sustainable training hub for 18-24 year olds to train and be deployed in parishes, especially in our church schools.
- Greenhouse – as part of the Resource Church, to provide leadership learning communities for emerging leaders and their mission and discipleship projects.
- Curacy succession – looking to nurture and deploy curates to their next posts, within and beyond the Deanery.

Project Leads: Graham Watts, Doral Hayes, Dave Bull

5. New Churches and Congregations

St Andrew's Hatters Lane has been designated as a Diocesan Resource Church and is receiving financial support to enable (among other things) two new church plants. We seek to enable these plants to launch and flourish within the supportive wider ecology of the Deanery

Our approach will be to ask two questions in this order:

1. Where is the Lord calling us to plant?
2. Is this a Resource Church plant or is it for someone else?

Our Resource Church plans include a long-term discernment process for plants in 2023 & 2025. Besides church planting, we anticipate the Resource Church will bring to the Deanery and beyond many other benefits (such as Greenhouses, mentioned above).

Project leads: Simon Dust, Dave Bull

6. Partnership Links

The kingdom of God is Wycombe Deanery is far bigger than simply the Anglican churches. Historically we have not always done well at connecting with other Christian partners. We aim during the term of this Deanery Plan to create a Partnership Directory and to use it to build stronger links between charities, churches and other organisations with whom we can serve God's kingdom purposes.

Project Lead: Nick Cousins

Further Information

Churches & leaders

An up-to-date list of our churches, clergy and licensed lay ministers can be found at <http://www.wycombedeanery.com/churches.html>

Schools

We have 12 Church of England schools in the Deanery. They are listed, together with links to websites, at <http://www.wycombedeanery.com/schools.html>

Deanery Data

Parish Dashboards - Oxford Diocese maintains a dashboard for each parish with detailed information such as attendance, electoral roll, weddings, funerals and baptisms. This data can be accessed here: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/support-services/parish-support/parish-dashboards/>

Census data – The Church of England Research and Statistics department maintains an interactive map for every parish in the country holding national data such as census, deprivation, boundaries etc. This can be accessed here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/research-and-statistics>

Communications

For Deanery Communications, including social media, please contact Nick Gallant on gallantgrafix@gmail.com

Introduction

The area of Buckinghamshire covered by the Wycombe Deanery stretches from the Thames Valley in the South East to the Chilterns Escarpment in the North West. It contains a few small towns and dozens of villages in stunningly beautiful countryside surrounding its urban centre, which is the larger town of High Wycombe. In general terms, it is an affluent area and in a recent survey High Wycombe was named as the fourth happiest town in the South East. However, this is certainly not the complete picture. The Wycombe Deanery contains pockets of great deprivation, particularly in High Wycombe itself, not least because of its significantly diverse demography and if consideration is given to the area in the context of the published figures for Buckinghamshire as a whole, this different perspective becomes very clear.

The Wycombe area has:

- The highest concentration of children living in low-income households
- The most ethnically diverse community with lower levels of health and wellbeing.
- The highest rates for emergency admissions to hospital overall, for both adults and children.
- 14,000 residents living in households at higher risk of food poverty.
- A significantly higher proportion of unemployment benefit claimants compared with the County average
- A higher proportion of residents seeking support from the Citizens Advice Bureau compared with the County average
- A higher rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crime than the County average.
- A higher number of young people and adults with issues of mental health and wellbeing.

It is unfortunate that poverty in the midst of wealth often gets missed and therefore it has to be right that one of the Deanery's aims is to deepen the relationship with our mission focussed partners to help tackle the issues highlighted above. It aims to do this by establishing a partnership network which will support the mission and activities of our individual churches; and to encourage them to interact with and to pray for these partners. There may also be opportunities to help fund some of their activities as has been done in past years from our Deanery Mission Fund.

The first step in 'making this happen' is the creation of a Partnership Directory that attempts to list in one place, all such partners /organisations, with a brief description of

their mission, aims and objectives, highlighting particularly those with a strong Christian ethos. One of the Deanery principles is to serve the local churches; and we can do that by highlighting what the charities are already doing; perhaps helping to leverage individual projects and take them to the next level.

Major Local Partners

There are some major local partners with whom we work in a significant way through the provision of volunteers and direct support from a number of our churches.

One Can Trust

Since 2011, One Can Trust has operated a **foodbank** based in High Wycombe, serving the town and South Buckinghamshire. Growing quickly to address a growing crisis of **food poverty**. One Can collects over £280,000 worth of food every year from all over the community; it sorts it, stores it and creates **food parcels** that feed adults, children and families. One Can partners with 15 **front line agencies** who refer people to it for food aid. It has scores of collections points and works with schools, churches, community groups, supermarkets and businesses of all sorts as well as a core of approximately 120 volunteers. From its warehouse and food store it is currently sending out well in excess of 500 parcels **a month**

Wycombe Refugee Partnership

A multi-cultural group in High Wycombe who have come together out of a shared concern to help destitute refugee families in the UK. They find them private rental accommodation in the Wycombe area and give wrap-around support, helping with job-seeking and registration with schools, doctors, dentists and English classes. they have so far resettled 18 families with refugee status and are now expanding their work to include the increasing number of asylum seekers that have arrived in the town.

Wycombe Homeless Connection

Wycombe Homeless Connection believe that every homeless individual in High Wycombe has worth and should have the chance of a fresh start, no matter what their situation. They work with the One Can Trust to ensure the poorest people in Wycombe have enough food to eat offering wide ranging practical personal support and advice including help accessing emergency accommodation; support with emergency food packs, clothing, hygiene products; help accessing social support and benefits; access to counselling and other emotional support. Help with registering to vote, gain ID, important document replacement, CV writing, access to the internet and more. An **outreach project** connects

those living on the street to help and homes. They also provide **emergency winter shelter** giving people a safe, warm place to stay during the coldest months of the year.

Wycombe Lighthouse

A non-residential week-long holiday club for children run by Christians from local churches working together, bringing churches and communities together around children. They are passionate about seeing children from all walks of life and abilities encountering God in a fun-filled week with teaching, sport, craft, performing arts and music. All children of school age from 5 to 11 are welcome. Lighthouse is staffed and run entirely by volunteers and **does not charge a set fee for children to attend but relies upon donations from local churches, businesses and other generous benefactors.**

Chaplaincies

There is no 'One size fits all' job description that describes the chaplaincies that support our front-line organisations and other groups in Wycombe and its surrounding area. In broad brush terms they provide spiritual from both a Christian, secular or multi faith stand points. They offer pastoral support, counselling and often act as a point of contact for local faith communities. Among the most prominent and active of our local chaplaincies are those that support:

- Bucks New University
- Wycombe Hospital
- Thames Valley Fire Service
- Thames Valley Police
- Wycombe Abbey School (and other schools)
- Wycombe Wanderers FC