

**Vicar's Report on the Benefice (our group of parishes) in 2026**  
**For the 2026 AGMs of Ivinghoe, Pitstone, Slapton and Marsworth**

Our vision in 2025 remained consistent with the previous year – and, at the end of February (shortly after the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the sudden passing of Rt. Rev. Alan Wilson) our parishes were greatly encouraged by Rev. Canon Dave Bull, Area Dean of Wycombe, becoming the new Bishop of Buckingham. Folk who have met +Dave have been impressed with his humility, his spirituality and his positive outlook on life. With our prayers we fully expect him to become as well-liked and well-respected as his predecessor.

In our own parishes, there were the services you would expect of your Parish Church – Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas plus Sundays, Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals and Burials. Do remember that our services and events – as well as our contact details – are always available at [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)

And there were events for the wider community. Special mention should be made of the Slapton Village Fete, the Art Exhibition at Ivinghoe Church and the resurrection of the Marsworth Flower Festival. These (and other) events were only possible because volunteers from the wider community combined with church members - all generously giving of their time and talents. Once again, I want to assure everyone that I am extremely grateful for all your hard work: it really does make a huge difference to our communities.

Talking of our communities I am conscious that planned housing developments will be a big issue for us all going forward. In the autumn, Oxford Diocese contacted Marsworth Parochial Church Council (PCC) with the news that the Diocese is looking to sell for development some of the Glebe Land on the edge of the village. The PCC discussed this proposal and came to the conclusion that to *lose productive farmland* and to *build properties without upgrading the existing infrastructure* was not a proposal we could support. The PCC voted unanimously against the proposal of the Diocese – and communicated our thinking and this decision to Oxford. However, it remains to be seen how much weight the opinion of the people on the ground actually carries.

More positively it was a very busy year for our Bell Towers. The newly-restored bells at Slapton attracted visitors from across the region – and this seemed to create a certain amount of interest in the Towers at Ivinghoe and Marsworth too. All our teams welcome new ringers so, if you fancy a go, do feel free to get in touch with the appropriate Tower Captain.

**Looking Forward**

People, I remain keen for our churches to work with other groups in order to make our parishes better places. I'm thankful for those partners whom we have joined with over the past year. I hope we can continue to identify shared goals and values as we move forward together.

Rev. James Grainger-Smith  
Vicar of Ivinghoe with Pitstone, Slapton and Marsworth

March 2026