

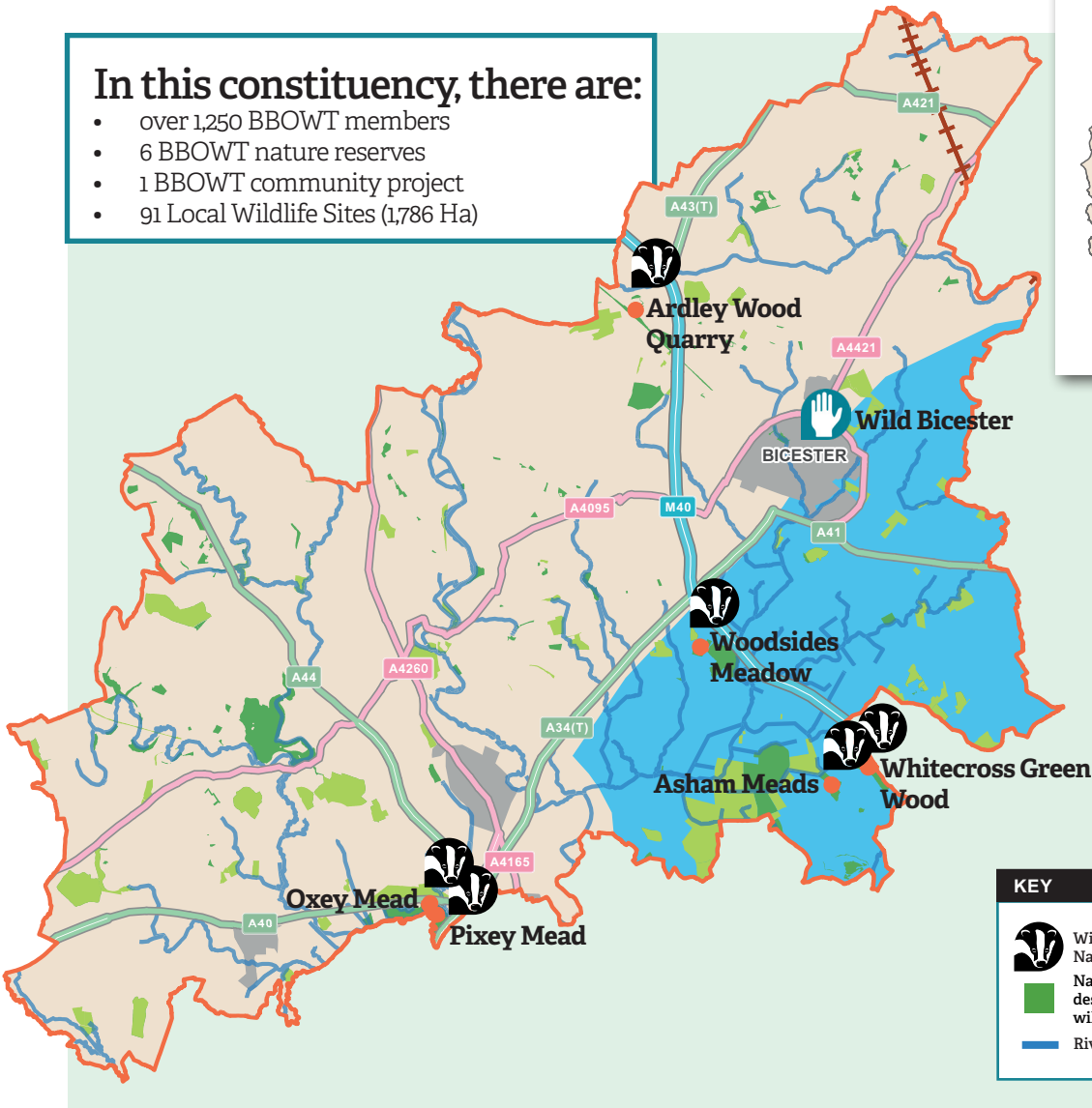
# Bicester & Woodstock Constituency



**Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
& Oxfordshire  
Wildlife Trust**

## In this constituency, there are:

- over 1,250 BBOWT members
- 6 BBOWT nature reserves
- 1 BBOWT community project
- 91 Local Wildlife Sites (1,786 Ha)



KEY	
	Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve
	Wildlife Trust Community project
	Nationally designated wildlife sites
	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
	Rivers and streams
	Bernwood, Otmoor, Ray project area

## Nature in the constituency

### Geology and Wildlife

Our Ardley Wood Quarry nature reserve has geological features of national importance, as well as abundant wildlife. The diverse array of habitats shelters many butterfly species, great crested newt and grass snake.

The southern section of the constituency includes the wildlife-rich wetlands of Otmoor and the lower reaches of the River Ray. However, the river was recently classified as being in bad ecological health in the State of Our Rivers 2024 report, one of the lowest classifications.

### Bernwood Forest and Ray Valley Living Landscape

One of the last remaining traditional floodplain meadows in England, this large Living Landscape covers an area between Oxford, Bicester and Aylesbury. It includes 48,400 hectares of woodland, mixed farmland and floodplain meadows across the boundary between Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The entire area is ecologically linked through the River Ray, which flows west alongside some of the last remaining

traditional floodplain meadows in England, to join the River Cherwell at Islip, north of Oxford.

Woodsides Meadow is part of the internationally important Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Close SSSI, one of the largest continuous complexes of rich wildflower meadows. Here medieval 'ridge and furrow' plough marks, testify to the fact that the site has never been 'improved' by modern farming. Swaths of wild flowers appear each year, with over 100 plant species recorded.



There are 46 Wildlife Trusts across the UK working towards nature's recovery. The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, who believe that we need nature and nature needs us.

## Working for wildlife



### Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

LNRS will set out and map priorities for nature's recovery in each of 48 areas in England. BBOWT is working with local authorities and other organisations on preparing LNRS across our three counties.

### Wild Bicester

Wild Bicester is a joint project between BBOWT, Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council. We want everyone, whatever their age or background, to get involved and turn their homes and communities into wildlife-rich places to create a greener, healthier and wilder Bicester.

Parks, allotments, school grounds and community spaces can all offer something for nature and, in doing so, can bring people together, creating healthier and more socially connected communities. Wilder neighbourhoods are an essential part of our health and wellbeing, and

we know that people who spend time in nature are happier and healthier.

### Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and Ray

Since 2022, BBOWT has led a feasibility study to draw out the most immediate opportunities for nature and people in the Bernwood Otmoor Ray (BOR) landscape. Six priority project concepts will form the basis of a new landscape-scale programme of work. These projects will help to ensure that vitally important BOR sites are protected, restored, extended and connected up at scale for the benefit of wildlife and people.

“Volunteering with BBOWT nourishes the soul and helps maintain a balance in my life”  
BBOWT volunteer

## About BBOWT

BBOWT has a vision of a wilder Berks, Bucks and Oxon, with more nature everywhere, for everyone. Our aim is to create bigger, wilder, connected landscapes, where wildlife can thrive. We want to put nature into recovery, with 30% of land in our three counties well managed for wildlife by 2030.

Our mission is to bring about nature's recovery through local action, empowering more people to connect with their local wildlife and take action to save it.

We work to manage habitats to tackle the nature and climate crisis locally. We also help give nature a voice in major planning or policy decisions that threaten nature's recovery.



## Our five priorities for the next government

- 1. Bring back the UK's lost wildlife** – BBOWT's Water Vole Recovery Project has already helped to increase the local range of water voles by more than 50 per cent over the past 15 years.
- 2. End river pollution and water scarcity** – BBOWT has joined a Wildlife Trusts' campaign calling on Government to create new bespoke legal protections for these habitats.
- 3. Fund wildlife-friendly farming** – BBOWT works with farmers across the three counties who prove that wildlife-friendly farming is possible and profitable.
- 4. Enable healthy communities** – BBOWT works with urban communities in Bicester, Banbury, Slough and Reading to help people and nature thrive together.
- 5. Tackle the climate emergency** – BBOWT's Chimney Meadows nature reserve project will help store more carbon than other habitats.



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## Contact details

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All 46 Wildlife Trusts are members of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (Registered charity number 207238. BBOWT registered charity number 204330).