

**LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
BACKGROUND EVIDENCE STUDIES  
PART 4**

**BIODIVERSITY AND HABITATS**

**Apr 2018**

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**SOURCES**

The primary source of data for this short study is: Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre – Little Milton Biodiversity Report – April 2018<sup>1</sup>

Little Milton Parish Council

April 2018

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<sup>1</sup> TWERC/17/785 dated 4 Apr 2018

## **Introduction**

The maintenance and conservation of biodiversity within the parish of Little Milton is an important priority. The parish is fortunate in having the Berks, Buck and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) Wells Farm Nature Reserve immediately adjacent to the village. A wide range of protected and notable species have been recorded in the parish, mainly on the BBOWT land, which is where the trained and experienced observers are to be found.

In addition, a small number of habitats outside the BBOWT Reserve have been identified as conservation priorities.

## **BBOWT Wells Farm Nature Reserve**

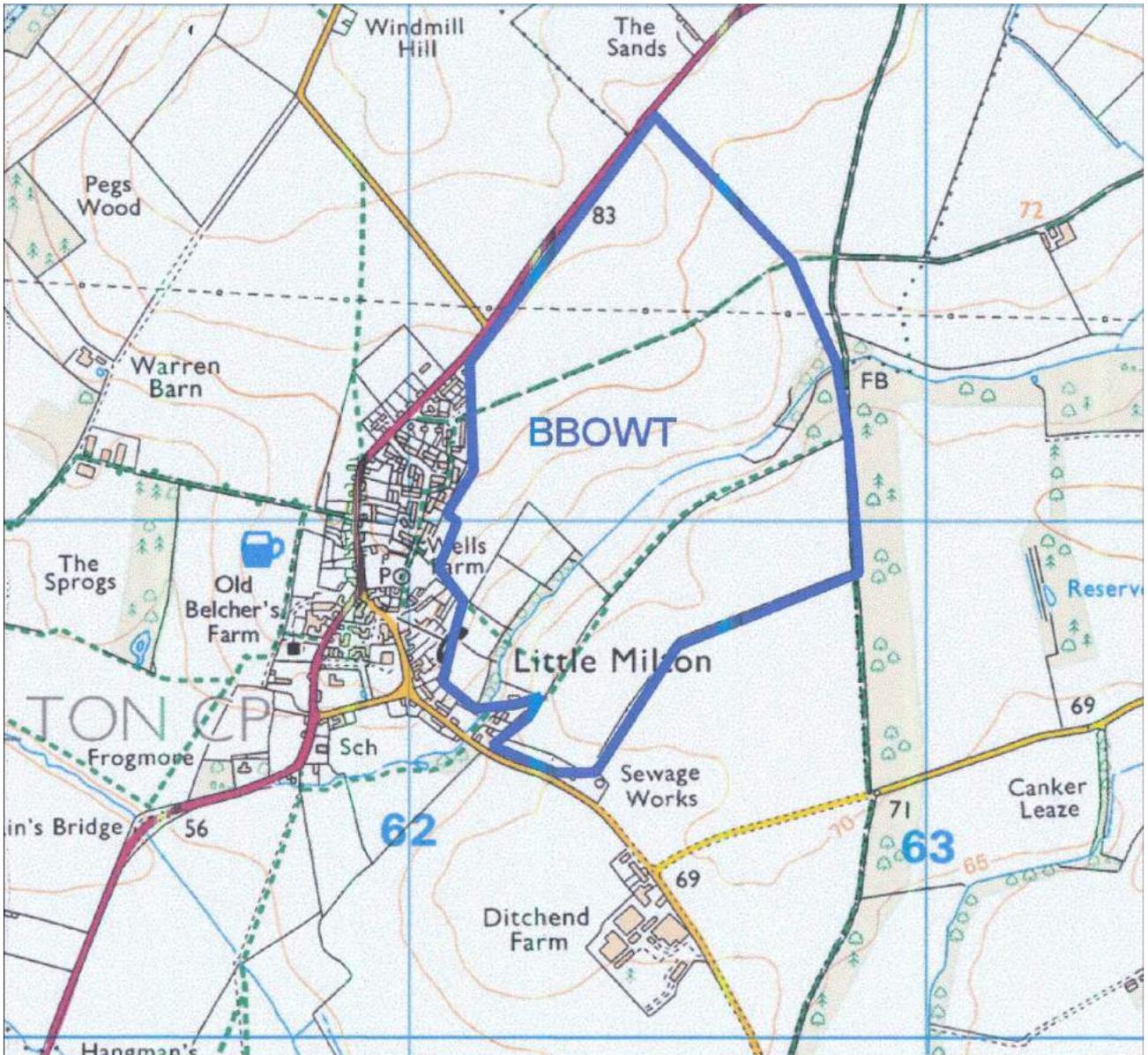
The BBOWT Wells Farm Nature Reserve is a Designated Wildlife Reserve<sup>2</sup>, described as follows:

The reserve consists of a working farm which strikes a balance between farming wheat and barley and creating a thriving habitat for wildlife. (There is also a community allotment). The open fields are edged with six metre wide margins which have been sown with a colourful wildflower seed mixture, which attract butterflies. In addition a wide grassy bank crossing the arable fields from north to south has been sown with a variety of tufted grasses to provide cover for spiders and beetles. Retained winter stubble and seed bearing crops supports mixed flocks of finches. Natural springs, meadow and ponds. The farm is named after the numerous springs emerging on the valley side. In the valley bottom, a wildflower meadow has been created and a small tree-lined brook links two ponds attracting a wide range of wildlife such as frogs, toads, chaffinches, coots and dragonflies.

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<sup>2</sup> TWERC/17/785 dated 4 Apr 2018

**BBOWT Wells Farm Nature Reserve  
Outlined in Blue**



## Legally Protected and Notable Species – Little Milton Parish

The following Legally Protected and Notable Species under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* have been recorded in Little Milton Parish, principally on the BBOWT Wildlife Site, since 2000:

Amphibians	Common Toad
Birds	Mallard, Grey Partridge, Quail, Red Kite, Kestrel, Merlin, Hobby, Lapwing, Snipe, Curlew, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-Backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Stick Dove, Barn Owl, Swift, Green Woodpecker, Willow Warbler, Skylark, Swallow, House Martin, Meadow Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Dunnock, Whinchat, Wheatear, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Redwing, Mistle Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Whitethroat, March Tit, Starling, House Sparrow, Linnet, Brambling, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting, Corn Bunting,
Fish – Boney	Bullhead
Flowering Plants	Prickle Poppy, Wild Strawberry, Hoary Plantain, Greater Yellow Rattle, Corn Spurrey, Wild Pansy, Pansy, Treacle-mustard, Cornflower, Corn Chamomile, Field Scabious
Invertebrates - Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps	Red-tailed Mason Bee, Yellow-shouldered Nomad Bee
Invertebrates - Beetles	Flax Flea Beetle
Invertebrates - Moth	White Ermine, Cinnabar, Rustic, Large Nutmeg, Small Squarespot
Invertebrates - True Flies	Hornet Robberfly
Mammals - Terrestrial (bats)	Noctule Bat, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano, Pipistrelle,
Mammals - Terrestrial (excl. bats)	Hedgehog, Otter, Badger, Water Vole, Harvest Mouse, Brown Hare,
Reptiles	Grass Snake

## Section 41: Habitats of Principal Importance in England applicable to Little Milton

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England, as required by the Act.

Fifty-six habitats of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and continue to be regarded as conservation priorities in the subsequent UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. They include terrestrial habitats such as upland hay meadows to lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and freshwater and marine habitats such as ponds and subtidal sands and gravels.

### ***Little Milton Parish - Sites identified in TVERC Biodiversity Report:***

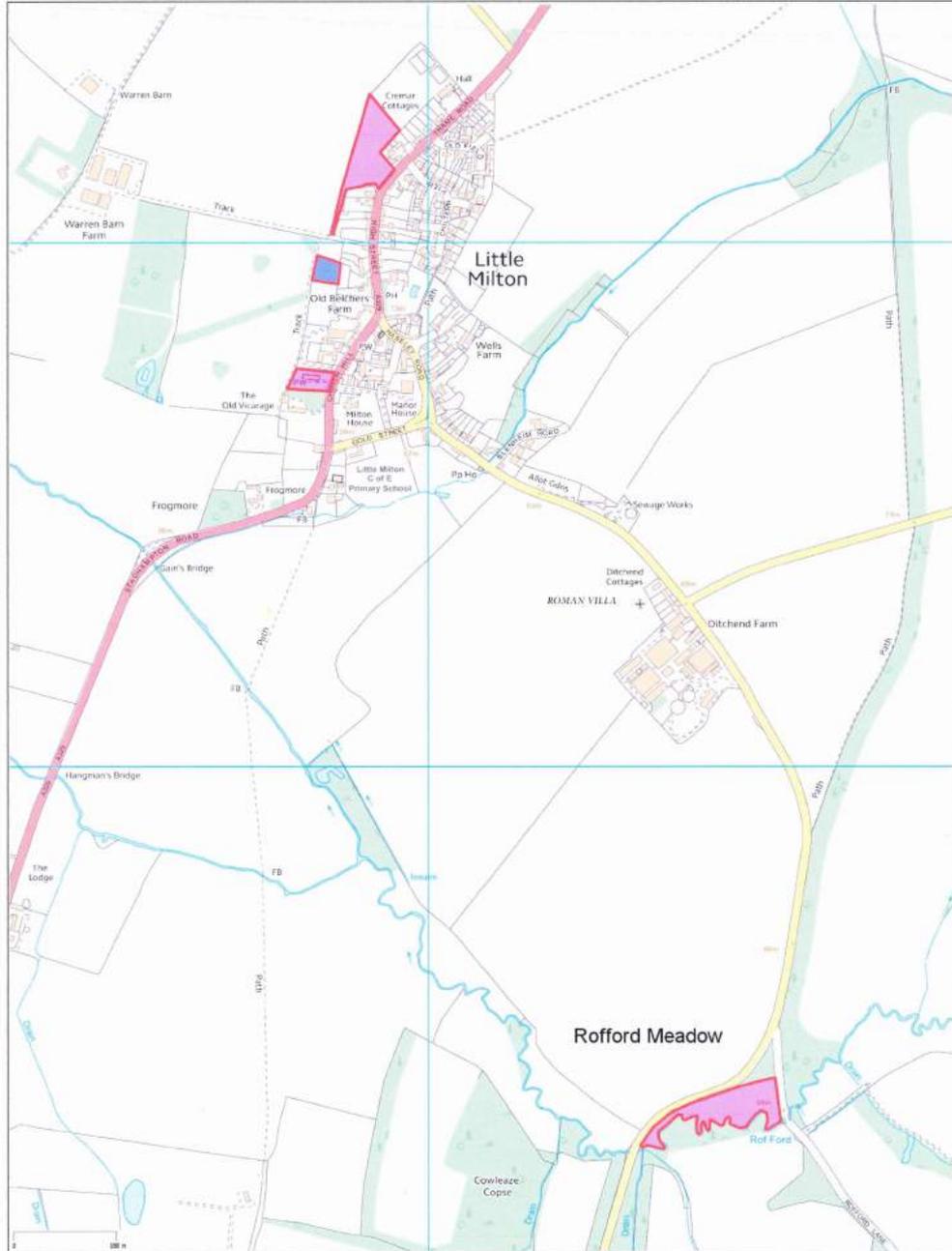
Arable and horticulture Grassland River	Traditional orchards Possible Grassland Sites**
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\*\* 'Possible Grassland Sites' are those who have been identified as possibly meeting the criteria for a Section 41 habitat, in this case probably Lowland Calcareous Grassland, but which cannot as yet be conformed without further on-site investigation<sup>3</sup>. TVERC use the category of possible priority grassland in cases where they believe there is a good chance that the area is priority grassland habitat, but it is impossible to say for certain without actually getting out and surveying the area<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Telephone call Coward/TVERC 5 Apr 2018

<sup>4</sup> TVERC email 6 Apr 2018

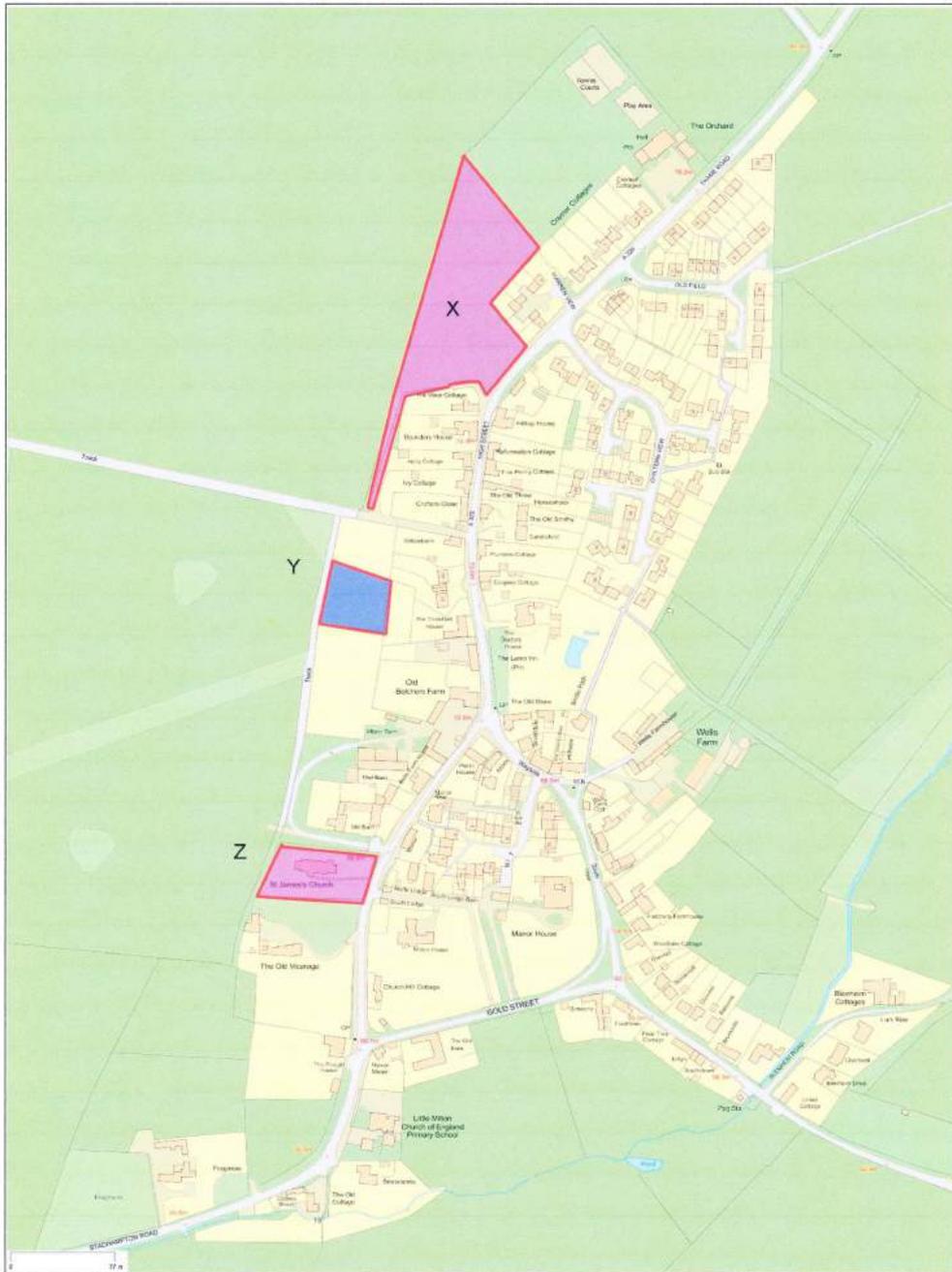
# Non-River Habitats – Little Milton Parish



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-  = Possible Priority Grassland
-  = Traditional Orchard

# Non-River Habitats – adjacent to or within the village



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### **Table of Non-River Habitats**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Habitat</b>	<b>Description</b>
X	Possible Priority Grassland	Single plot and access route designated as 'Land adjoining Hill View Cottage' Title No ON 208725. Currently lying fallow – grass and shrubs
Y	Traditional Orchard	Part of Old Belcher's Farm garden – orchard and grass
Z	Possible Priority Grassland	St James' Churchyard – mown grass, headstones and monuments
Rofford Meadow	Possible Priority Grassland	Triangle of land at junction of Rofford Lane. Grass bordered by hedge or stream

### **Table of River Habitats**

River	River Thames
Watercourses	Haseley Brook; Gainsbridge Brook

The Environment Agency has advised that the River Thames and Haseley Brook, which form the western and southern boundaries of the parish, and which are both landscape features, are home to rare and protected species and the EA has advised that it would be beneficial if the Neighbourhood Plan could build on the protection afforded to them under the Local (Development) Plan<sup>5</sup>.

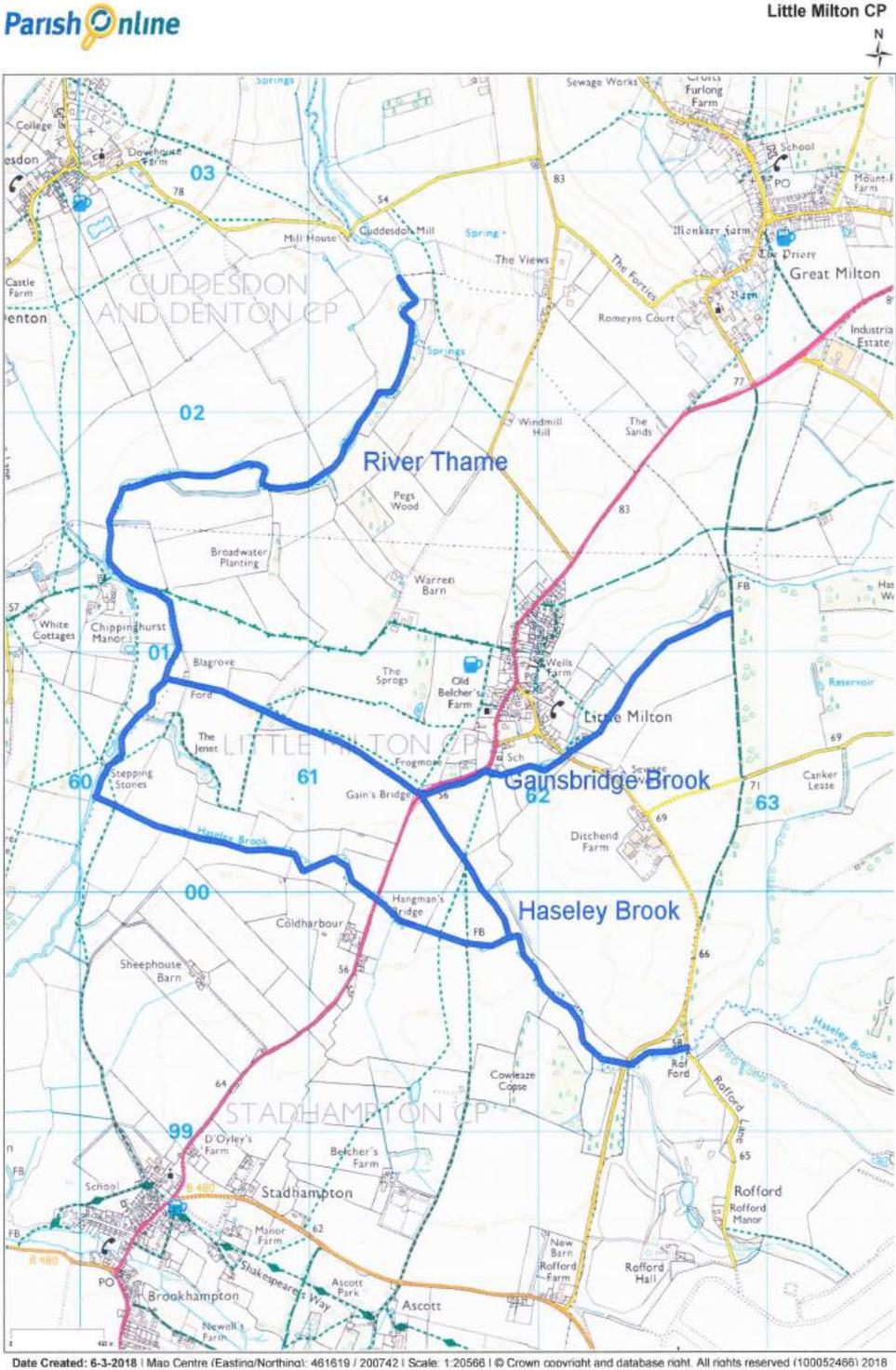
Watercourses are vital to biodiversity, provide a unique range of habitats, act as wildlife corridors, and form an important element of South Oxfordshire's ecological network. They make a significant contribution towards the character of our landscape and form an important part of green infrastructure. They provide vital ecosystem services, help improve water quality, provide drainage and flood management and provide green space for informal recreation<sup>6</sup>.

The River Thames Conservation Trust (RTCT) was established in 2012 to preserve and enhance the terrestrial and aquatic life of the River Thames, for the benefit and enjoyment of the local Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire communities. The Trust has developed significantly over the last two years and is involved in a range of practical conservation projects in collaboration with diverse and expanding stakeholder engagement. The Trust works closely with Freshwater Habitats Trust on a number of projects and both organisations are joint catchment coordinators for the Thames catchment area, in partnership with the Environment Agency. The Trust also runs a catchment-wide water quality monitoring network and has initiated a number of independent habitat improvement projects.

<sup>5</sup> Environment Agency response to Reg 14 consultation 8 Apr 2018

<sup>6</sup> SODC draft Local Plan Oct 2017

# River and Watercourse Habitats within Little Milton Parish Boundary



## **Conclusions**

BBOWT Wells Farm Nature Reserve is a very important asset in terms of conserving biodiversity, where a wide range of protected and notable species have been observed.

The River Thame and its tributaries are home to rare and protected species and are a focus of conservation activity by the River Thame Conservation Trust.

There are a small number of other habitats in the parish which also merit conservation.