

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Whitchurch and Ganarew is a rural Parish with an exceptional landscape and nationally important habitats containing rare and endemic species.
- Around 85% of the Parish lies within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Approximately 10% of the AONB lies within one of three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- Two SSSIs have been given the higher designation as ‘Special Areas of Conservation’ (SACs) as part of the pan-European network of important high-quality conservation sites.
- There are seven Local Geological Sites of regional importance including unique cave systems
- The Parish includes 10 Nature Reserves covering over 100 ha.
- Approximately 5% of our Parish land area is occupied by residential and business buildings, civic amenities and transport infrastructure.
- There is a high risk of serious flooding in areas of the Parish as shown on the Environment Agency Flood Risk map.
- There is risk of flood damage to properties from rivers and run-offs on impermeable surfaces which also create travel and access difficulties.
- 50%-60% of land is used for agricultural purposes: 40% is woodland and land for commercial forestry. the Forestry Commission manages over 130 ha of woodland, most of which is a SSSI.
- Villages and settlements in the Parish are small so all dwellings are close to open space in one form or another. No homes in the Parish are more than 3 miles from the River Wye.