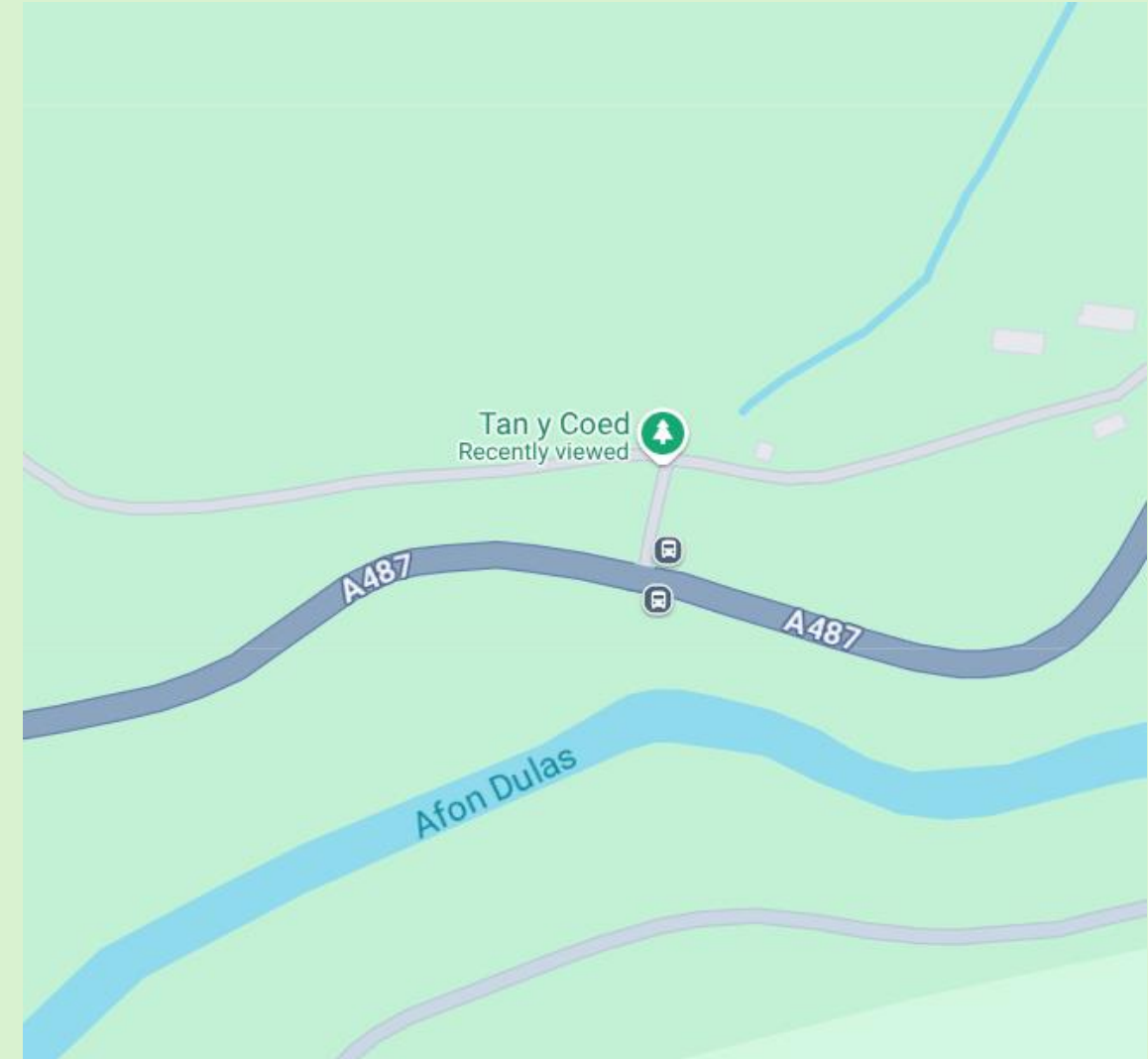


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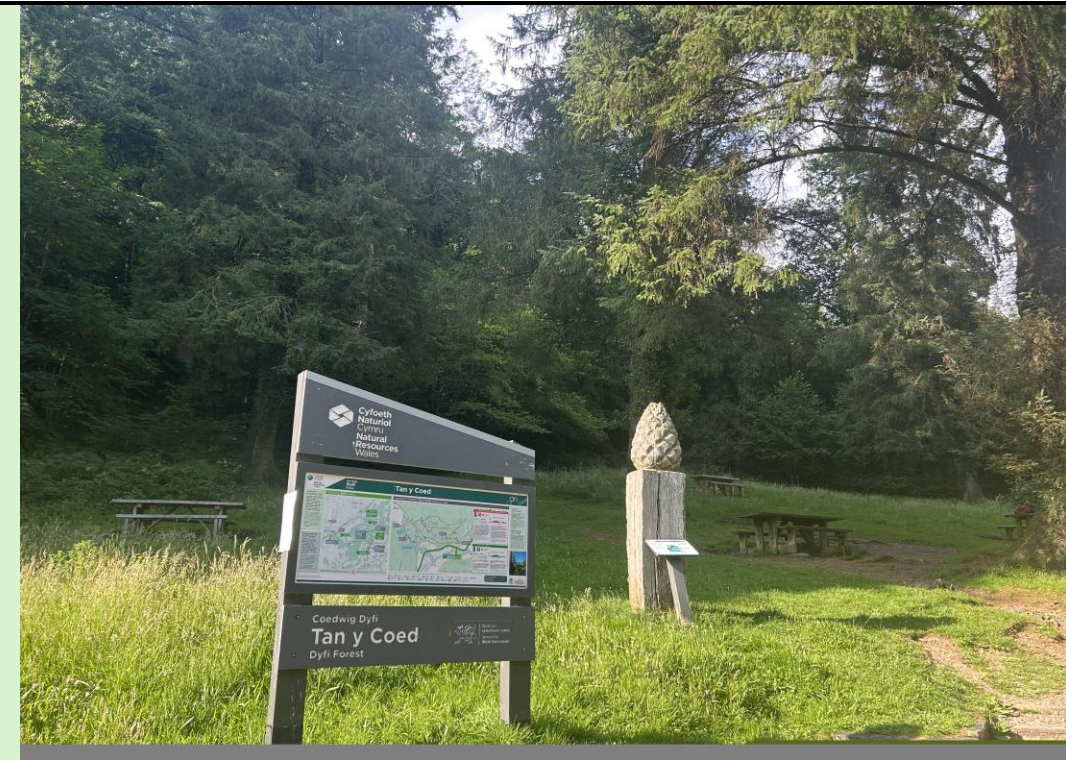
There has been
no AI used in this
assignment.

Sustainability in the Early Years



Discover

The place I have chosen is Tan Y Coed, near Machynlleth, which is part of the Dyfi Forest. This place is a woodland is a part of the National Resources Wales. According to the Natural Resource Wales (2025) the Natural Resource Wales is a branch of the Welsh government which help manage and tend to the natural resources in Wales. This area is an ideal place for visitors who wish to picnic surrounded by the Douglas fir trees or those who want to make use of the walking trail and animal discovery trail found on the grounds. The animal discovery trail is ideal for young children to learn about what animals live in this woodland and a great opportunity to try and spot them. There is an audio book for those interested to download and listen to, to learn the history of the woodlands. On the walking trails there are signs guiding users on the path and also on which section of the audiobook to listen to.





I first went to Tan Y Coed after Covid restrictions were lifted after the first lockdown. As many people experienced during the nationwide pandemic, my mental health wasn't in a good state. However, I found the more time I spent in outdoor areas like Tan Y Coed the less anxious, grounded and well I started to feel. Mind (2025) agrees that there is a link to the outdoors and people's mental health. Mind (2025) further explains that regularly exploring the outdoor world can improve mental health, help people feel less stressed and help confidence and self-esteem.

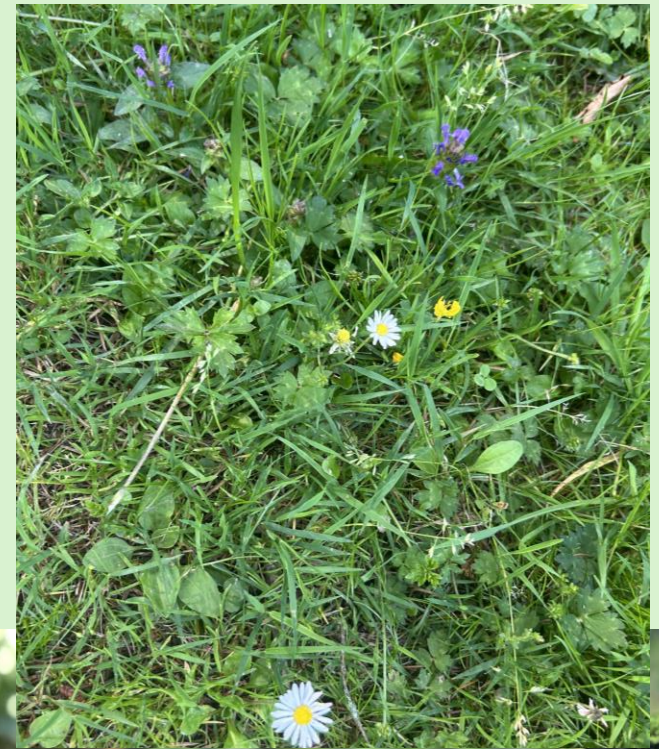
John Muir

I recently discovered within my research that John Muir felt similarly about outdoor areas as I do. According to the John Muir Trust (No date) John Muir believed that it was important for people to spend time in nature as it allows us to replenish our mind and bodies. John Muir felt so passionately about this that he used his work to try and educate the public and inspire them to explore and make the most out of their outdoor environments near them. John Muir felt strongly about protecting wildlife which I feel by educating people is a good encouragement of this.



There are a variety of flowers and greenery at Tan Y Coed. Whilst I was out exploring, I spotted some wild mushrooms growing out of the side of a tree that had fallen down. All plants are an important part of the ecosystem. These mushrooms can provide food for many of the wildlife found at Tan Y Coed such as birds, mice and even foxes and badgers. Similarly, the flowers found at Tan Y Coed play a vital part in the ecosystem for humans and animals such as bees a like. The Society of American Florists (No date) explains that flowers have a positive impact on humans as studies have shown flowers can have a long lasting effect on our moods. Studies have shown that flowers can make people feel less depressed and anxious. Flowers also provide bees with nectar which helps them make honey and spread pollen to grow more flowers.

Explore



During my time at Tan Y Coed I discover one of the audio trail signs pictured below and one of the animals which was an ant from the animal discovery trail on the trail pictured below. The ant found on the discovery trail made me think about what activities could be done with children at Tan Y Coed. I tried to make a little bridge in a small tree for the insects which lived or that may pass there, this is pictured below. After thinking, I decided to pick a leaf that was found on the floor and placed it within the pinecone. I thought that this could also act as a little shelter for the insects as a dark cloud had started to cover the area. From this I would be able to speak to the children about different habitats in which the animals and insects may live in and further discuss the differences in this and further explore reasons that this may be. Another activity which could be done with the children is a treasure hunt. With the variety of different leaves and materials such as pinecones I could make a treasure hunt card for the children with the items on and ask them to find it, which we could discuss the difference in textures and the uses for these.





Conserve

In natural areas such as Tan Y Coed it is of upmost importance that we all play a part in conserving the wildlife and greenery within the area. During my visit to Tan Y Coed I unfortunately found litter on the ground near the picnic benches. RSPCA (No date) explains how harmful litter can be to wildlife. Plastic can seriously harm animals by causing cuts or could even pose as a choking threat to animals which may try to consume them.

The North Wales Wildlife Trust (No date) further explains that wildlife such as small animals and insects could potentially be trapped inside the plastic left behind while people picnic. This could result in their death which would have a negative impact on the ecosystem. Although it may seem insignificant that a few animals may be harmed it could have a greater impact in the long run as all animals play an important role even if it is not known to humans. I have linked the site below for more information.

<https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/take-action/litter-and-wildlife>



Litter seemed to be the biggest issue I found at Tan Y Coed during my visit there. This issue could be solved by organising litter picking activities with the nursery to get the children involved with caring for their environment and educating them on this. This links in with The Well-being of Future Generations Act. Usually in this type of area, in past experiences I also found that dog fouling was also an issue. However, pictured below is a sign I found several of on the trail, reminding people that if they choose to bring their dogs there and they foul to please pick it up to protect people from stepping in it. The British Ecological Society (2022) mentions that dog urine and faeces could have a greater impact on the biodiversity found in the area than one may imagine. The site continues that urine and faeces can damage the nutrients found within the soil. However, research shows that if a dog owner picks up the faeces produced by their pet, this alone can improve soil health and nutrients found in it. This supports the sign in showing that not only will it make it more convenient for other walkers using the trails but for the overall, health of the habitat for many plants and animals.



Share

It is important to create awareness in the importance of keeping our natural resources free from litter due to the implications it has on the biosystem and the ecosystem. One way we can create awareness is by sharing posters encouraging people to ensure they take their litter home with them or by asking the children to design and create a poster encouraging this. It could be made into a friendly competition in which parents and families vote for their favourite to guarantee the posters, and their messages are being seen by many people. Another way we can create awareness of this is by educating the young children within our settings on these matters. This could be done by choosing specific themes such as recycling, insects and animals and habitats. This would not only be interesting to the children within our care but will also educate the younger generations on how to care for the planet and the effects it could have if not done, in an age-appropriate manner. In the modern era of technology, we could reach further audiences by sharing our activities within the early years sector on social media platforms which settings may have their own group on. Sharing educational information from groups on social media.



Poster References

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