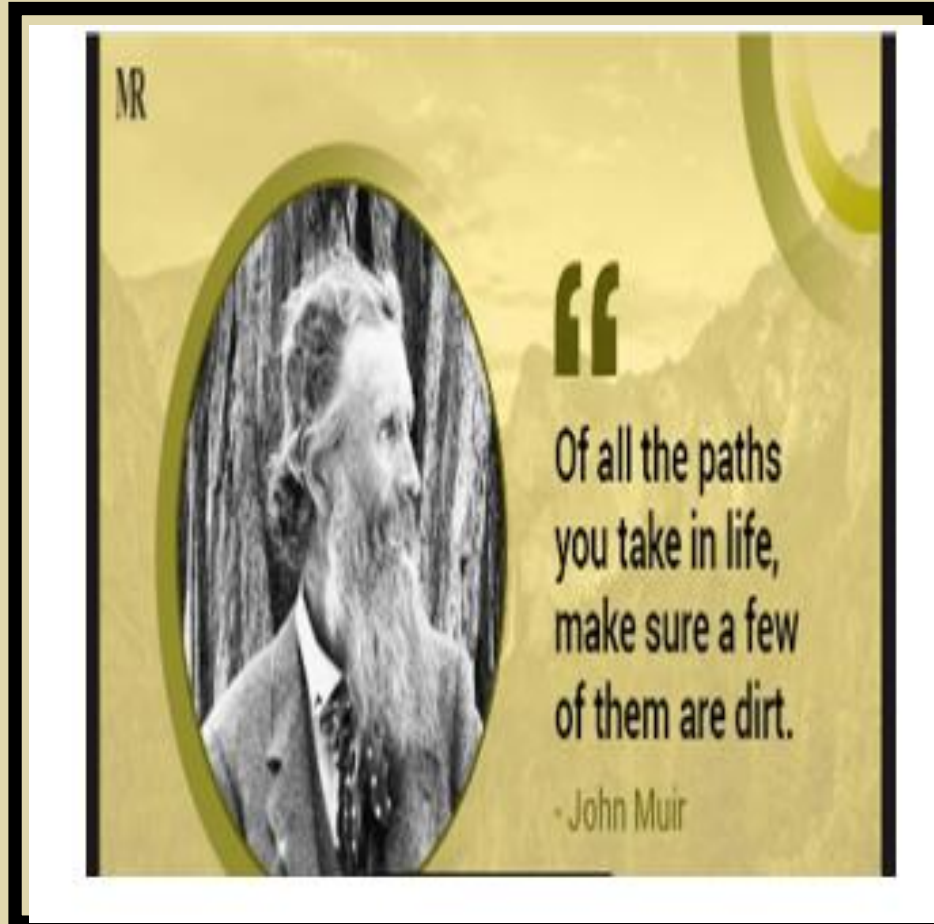




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THE JOHN MUIR AWARD – SANDY WATER PARK LLANELLI.

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### The John Muir Award.

The John Muir Award is a nature based award that encourages people to connect with wild places by discovering, exploring, conserving, and sharing their experiences. It is inspired by John Muir, a Scottish American naturalist and writer who dedicated his life to protecting nature and inspiring others to appreciate the outdoors. His work helped shape national parks and encouraged people to slow down and notice the world around them. One of his well known quotes captures the heart of the award and reflects my own experience exploring Sandy Water Park: "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." This award is about building a deeper relationship with nature, understanding why these places matter, and taking small steps to care for them.

# DISCOVER



Sandy Water Park has always been one of those places that feels like home to me. I've been going there since I was little, walking around the big pond with my family members, feeding the ducks, running ahead on the paths. Later on, it became the spot I'd go with friends, just wandering, talking, laughing, and feeling like we had all the time in the world. Now I take my own children there, and even our dog loves it. It's calm, quiet, and full of wildlife. The pond sits right in the middle, with long grasses, wildflowers, and little hidden corners where you can spot birds or insects. The woods make everything feel tucked away, and when you walk around to the far side, you can look out towards Llanelli Beach. It's one of those views that always makes me stop for a moment. Sandy Water Park holds memories from every part of my life, and that's why I chose it for my digital scrapbook. It's a place where I feel grounded, where my children explore freely, and where nature feels close and familiar.

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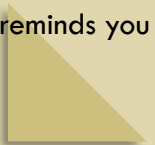
# DISCOVER.

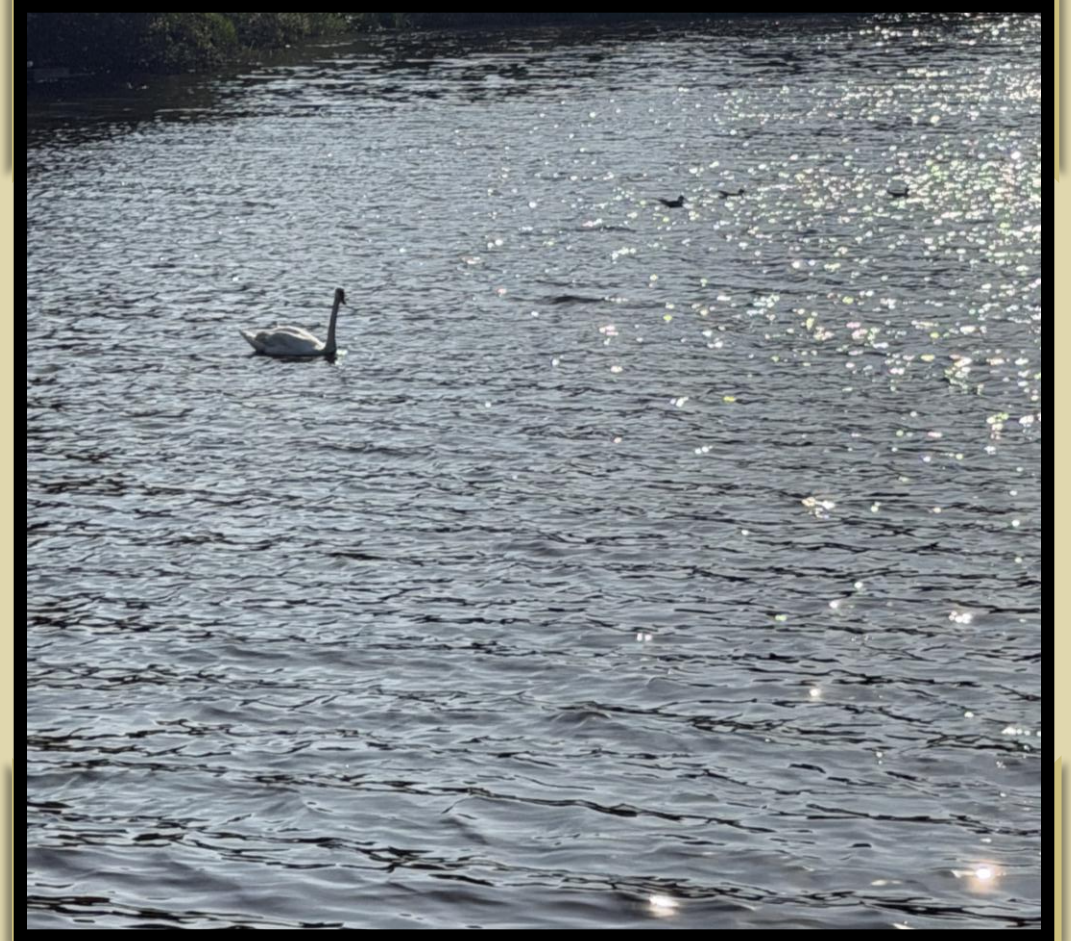


As I walked around Sandy Water Park, I started noticing all the tiny details that make the place feel alive. In some areas the grass had been left long, and at first it just looked wild, but then I realised it's meant to be that way. Leaving the grass long gives butterflies, bees, and insects a safe place to feed and hide. It's like a little nature hotel, buzzing with life. I saw butterflies drifting around and bees bouncing from flower to flower. I also noticed how many people were walking around the pond. Some were chatting, some were quiet and some were sitting on the benches just taking a moment. It really feels like a wellbeing spot, somewhere people come to slow down, breathe, and enjoy being outside.



Around the pond there are signs that tell you about the wildlife and the history of the area. They make you stop and look a bit closer. The ducks and swans were everywhere swimming, waddling along the path, and coming right up to people. Lots of families were feeding them, and you could see how excited the children were. Something I really noticed was how the swans behaved. Some swans swam alone, gliding quietly across the water, almost like they wanted their own space. Others stayed together in pairs. It was peaceful watching them, each one doing its own thing. There were lily pads floating on the pond too, spreading out like little green circles. They make the water look calm and almost magical. As I kept walking, I came to the forest part of the park. It's not a huge forest, but it feels like stepping into a different world shaded, quiet, and full of birdsong. The trees make everything feel tucked away, and the path winds through like a little adventure trail. It's the kind of place children love because it feels secret and exciting. When I walked up the hill, I stopped because you can look right over to Llanelli Beach. You get that fresh, clean beach smell, the kind that instantly reminds you of summer and being outdoors. It's one of those views that makes you feel lucky to live so close to nature.







Part of the grass is longer.



LilyPads in the pond.



Signs saying about the birds and ducks they have around this area.

## Explore

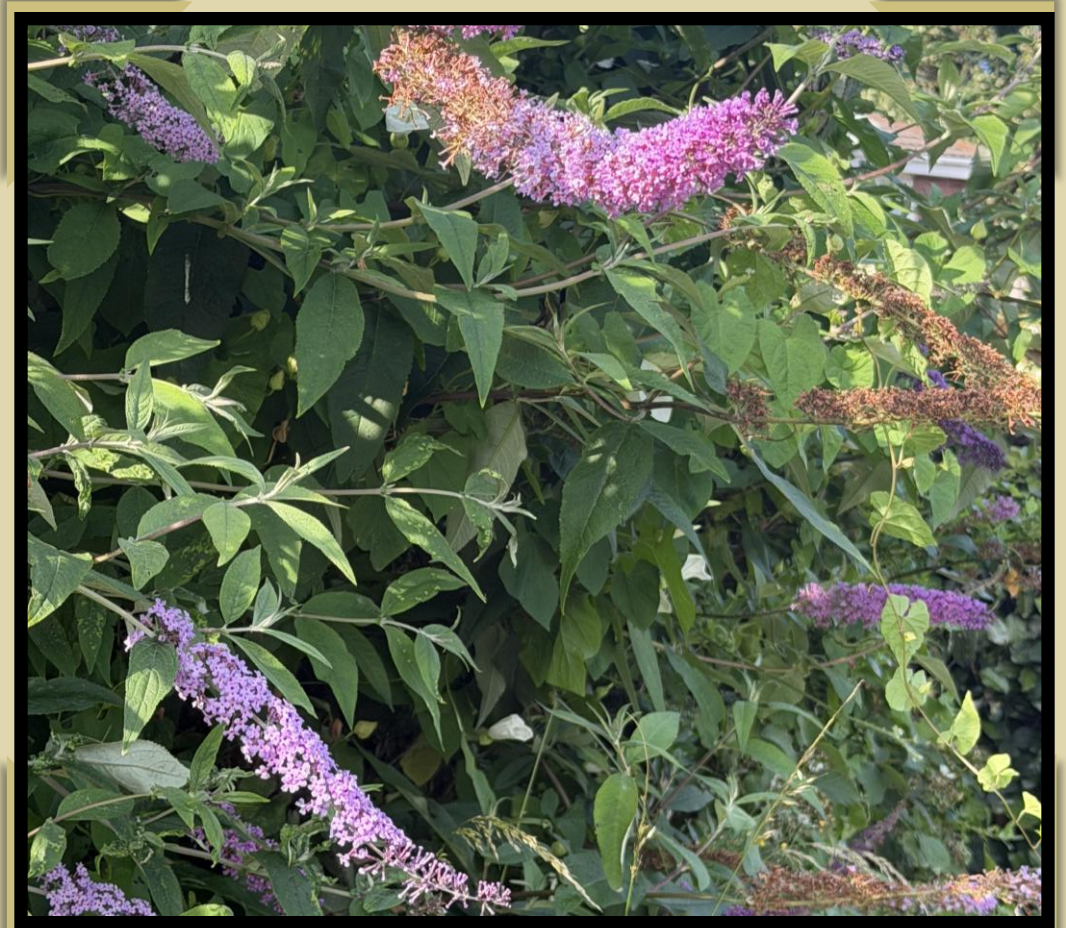
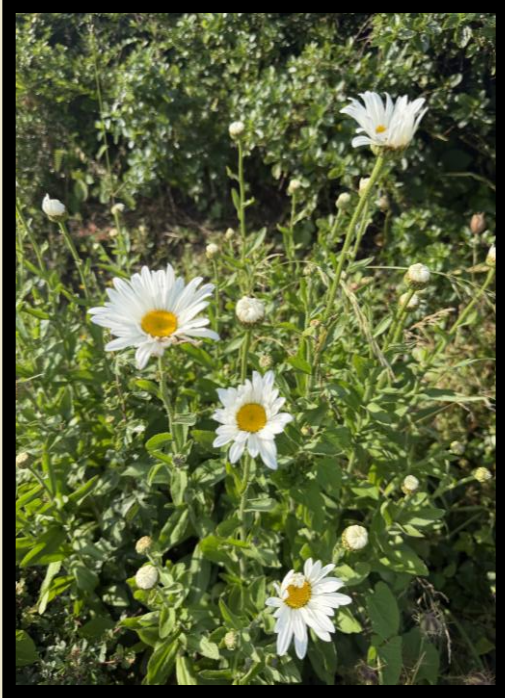


As I explored the area more closely, I spent time really looking at the pond. Around the edges there are wooden pallets in certain spots, these help protect the sides of the pond and stop the soil from slipping into the water. They also give insects, birds, and even small pond creatures safe places to perch or hide. When you slow down and look properly, you realise they're there to support the pond's wildlife, not just for decoration. When I looked closely at the flowers, I could see bees tucked right inside them and butterflies landing gently on the petals. There were so many because the long grass and wildflower patches give them food, shelter, and a safe place to live. These messy areas are actually perfect habitats full of nectar, shade, and hiding spots. I also noticed how much wildlife was around the pond in general, ducks, swans, tiny insects skating across the water, birds calling from the trees. Some swans swam alone, gliding quietly across the pond. When I researched this later at home, I found out that swans usually mate for life, so when one swims alone it can mean they've lost their partner or simply prefer to stay independent until they find one. Others swam together in pairs or little groups, moving almost in sync. It was peaceful watching them all move in their own way. There are also lots of trees and bushes around the pond, and I noticed how the ducks use them for shelter. Some were tucked underneath branches, resting in the shade, while others waddled out from the bushes to head back to the water. It made the whole area feel like a safe home for them. As I carried on exploring, I started noticing all the different flowers growing around the pond and tucked into the bushes. There were so many shapes and colours, some tiny and delicate, others tall and bright. One flower really stood out to me because before it opened, its bud looked just like a tiny tomato. It was round, smooth, and green, almost like a little fruit hiding inside the leaves. Seeing it at that stage made me realise how much happens before a flower actually blooms. You don't usually catch them in that moment.

Looking closer, I noticed how the bees were moving between all these flowers, collecting pollen from each one. The pollen is what keeps them going, it gives them the protein they need to survive and helps them feed their young. Watching them work made me appreciate how important these wildflower patches are. Without them, the bees wouldn't have the food they rely on, and the whole area would feel a lot less alive. As I looked deeper into the bushes, I noticed blackberry plants growing between the trees. Some berries were still small and green, while others were turning deep red and purple. It felt like a little hidden feeding spot for birds and other wildlife, and it showed how much the area provides food as well as shelter.

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# SEEING THE DIFFERENT FLOWERS.



# CONSERVE



For my conserve, I wanted to do something that would support the wildlife I had been observing around Sandy Water Park. After noticing how many birds rely on the trees, bushes, and sheltered spaces around the pond, I decided to create something that would give them extra support. At home, me and my little girls painted bird boxes together. They were very excited to do this activity and asked lots of questions, especially because they had come with me on the walk to Sandy Water Park and had seen the birds and their habitats for themselves. We chose bright colours and made sure the boxes were safe and suitable for small garden birds. We later hung the bird boxes in our garden, giving local birds a safe place to rest, nest, and stay protected. By making, decorating, and putting up these bird boxes, we contributed to the conservation of local wildlife and helped provide more habitats for birds in our community. This small but meaningful action links directly to the John Muir Award's conserve step, showing how we can care for nature not just in wild places, but at home too.

# CONSERVE



As part of our conserve actions, the girls also helped during a family visit to their grandparents house. We bought new flowers from the local garden centre and they helped plant them in the garden, carefully watering them afterwards and talking about why plants need water, sunlight, and care to grow. We discussed how having flowers around our gardens helps support wildlife by providing nectar for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. This small activity helped them understand how looking after plants can make a positive difference to nature, even in everyday family spaces.



For my share, I wanted to bring together everything I had learned throughout my John Muir Award journey and pass it on to others. I shared my discoveries from Sandy Water Park, the wildlife, the flowers, the bees, the swans, and all the small details that often go unnoticed. I also shared how completing the conserve activity helped me understand the importance of creating safe spaces for nature, even at home. As part of sharing my experience, I wanted to highlight how walking in calm, natural areas can support mental health. Spending time outdoors, slowing down, and noticing the environment can help reduce stress, improve mood, and create a sense of peace. My walk around Sandy Water Park showed me how powerful nature can be for wellbeing, and by sharing this PowerPoint, I hope to encourage others to explore green spaces and feel those benefits too. Sharing my journey completes the final step of the John Muir Award and helps inspire others to connect with and protect the natural world.

