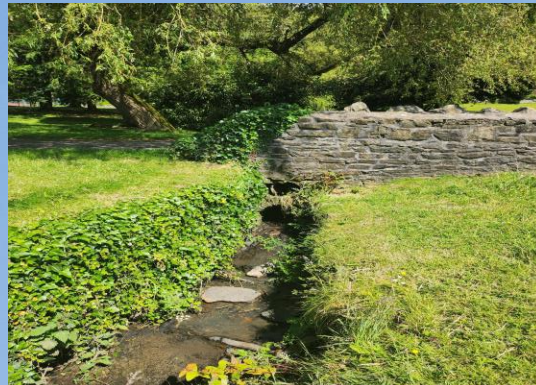
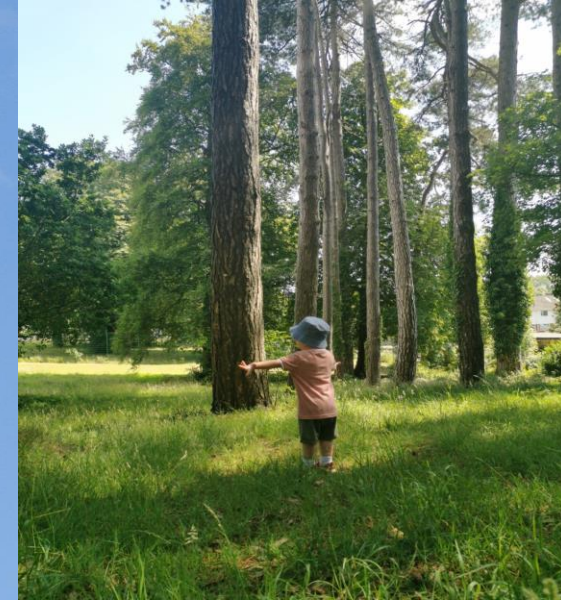
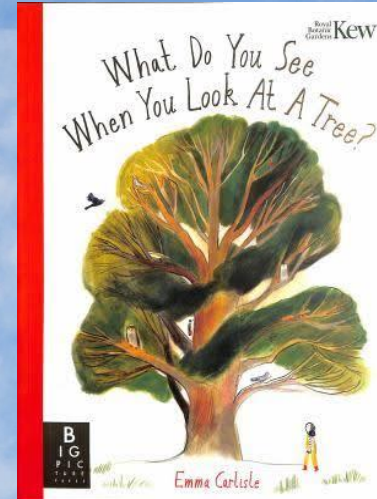




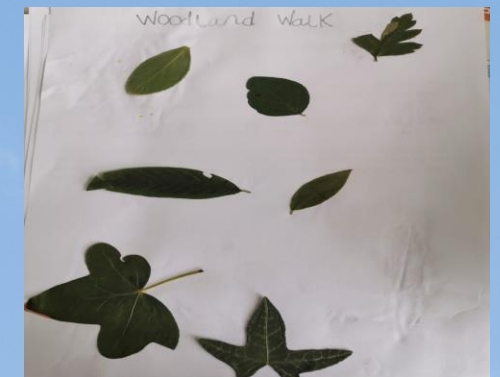
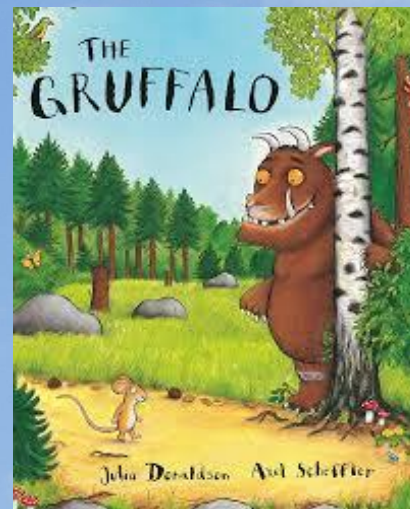
Baglan Park is our families favourite place for picnics and exploring, spending many hours telling stories and talking about nature that lives all around us with my two children. Living in Port Talbot we are very lucky to not only have a wonderful beach but a number of beautiful woodland area's such as Baglan and Margam Park. Participating in the completion of the John Muir award has provided me with a new-found passion and appreciation for the environment and the ways within which we can all help sustain it for many years to come.

## Explore...

We explored all areas of the park that conjure curiosity and wonder so we can tell stories. Sitting under giant trees that have stood and listened to so many other stories being told over the years. The leaves make wonderful crunching and rustling sounds under our feet and encourage the children to interact with the environment to create a more vivid and real feel to the stories being told. We like to look up at the trees reaching proudly into the sky, intertwined with each other. Roots buried deep into the soil to help feed and strengthen the tree and leaves that grow for all to see. My children compare the branches that are holding hands to the connection between people. We enhanced language and literacy skills by reading the *Gruffalo* and *What do you see when you look at a tree*. Both books encouraged the children and I to discuss the pictures as well as the vocabulary used within the texts.



*'The straight young trees too proudly stand  
Erect, apart, to take a brother's hand,  
But later when grown old and strong and wise,  
They see with understanding eyes,  
And then across the road they bend to grasp,  
A brother's hand in friendly leafy clasp;  
And as the changing seasons come and go,  
Thus bravely linked they welcome sun and snow,  
And friendly time but makes them stronger, kinder, closer grow'.*



## Explore...



On our journey of discovery and exploration around Baglan park the children chose crayons to do tree bark rubbing to see the designs each part of the tree made they also commented on how the tree felt, when doing this the children wanted to find out the age of a tree. We measured around the tree and applied a mathematical equation of dividing the measurement of the tree by 2.5 to estimate the approximate age of a tree. We did fingerprint stamping to make minibeasts as well as making a self-portrait with the items we had collected.



Machine Translated by Google

### MEASURING TREES

You can measure the **height** and the **age** of a tree using a few simple techniques and a tape measure.

#### MEASURING THE HEIGHT

This is particularly good for children to try out!

Choose a tree to measure, and walk away from the tree. Every so often bend forward and look through your legs back to the tree. When you can just see the top of the tree through your legs, stop. Mark this point and measure the distance along the ground from the tree to this point. This is roughly equal to the tree's height.

#### MEASURING THE AGE

You can get a rough estimate of the age of a tree without cutting it down and counting the rings.

The girth of a tree can be used to estimate its age, as roughly a tree will increase its girth by 2.5cm in a year. So, simply measure around the trunk of the tree (the girth) at about 1m from the ground. Make sure you measure to the nearest centimeter. Then divide the girth by 2.5 to give an age in years. A tree with a 50cm girth will therefore be about 20 years old.

The rate of growth will differ according to what type of tree it is. Some types of trees, such as oak and beech, will grow quite slowly, and so you should divide the girth measurement by 1.8. Pine trees, however, are very fast growing, so you should divide the girth measurement by 3.13.

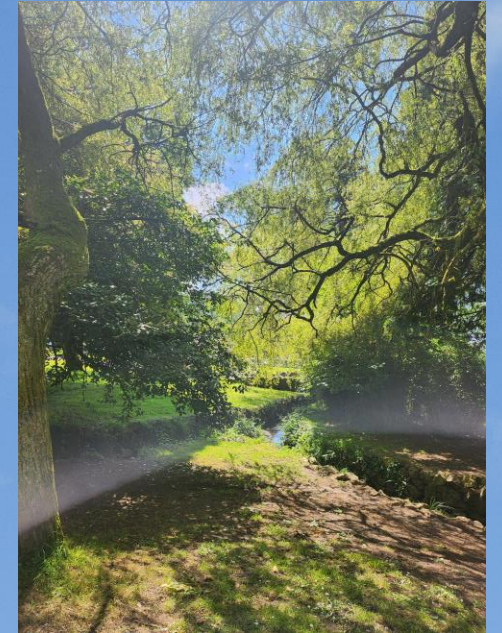
Other factors will affect the growth too, such as how close the tree is to other trees. If it's on its own, it has the space to grow faster than trees in a wood. An average woodland tree will only increase its girth by about 1.25cm per year.



## Wellbeing in nature.....



Exploring and embracing the environment and nature is a cathartic and romantic experience for me. It reminds me of literature I have read and paintings I have admired. The wind blowing in my hair, the smell of the trees, feeling the grass beneath my feet on a summer's day. All of these things provide me with a sense of calm and peace. I can reflect on worries and focus on putting troubles into perspective. Being surrounded by nature and the tranquility it brings encourages me to prioritise my wellbeing and mental health through the connection I feel with nature.

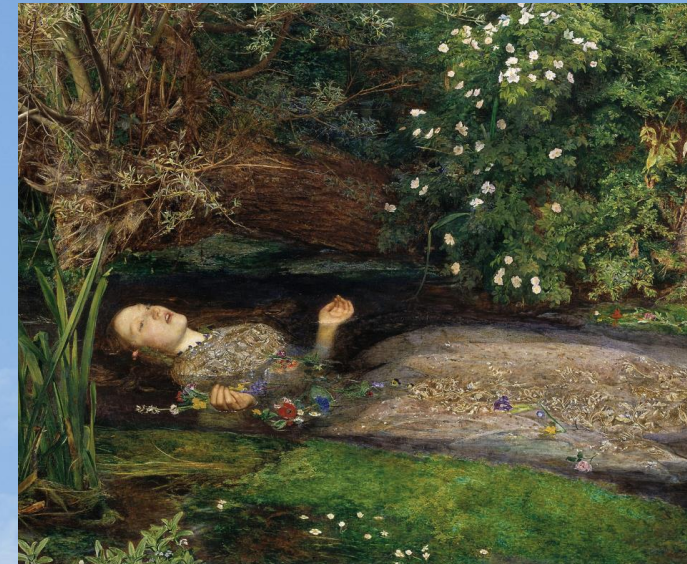


Laying in the grass looking up at the sky and treetops.



A walk through the park with Natalie Richardson. Please see below.

<https://youtu.be/1kq0W7nJcAo>



**Conserve:**  
**How can we help?**



**Minibeast Hotel: Building a minibeast hotel in parks, schools and gardens to encourage bugs to provide nesting and shelter.**



**Wildflower scattering to encourage pollinators.**



**Plastic play area that does not promote a sustainable environment.**



**When looking around the park we did notice that there were not many flowers or wildlife. We thought that this was a shame as they attract pollinators and encourage various species to the area. Over the many years we have visited the park we have never seen squirrels, foxes, hedgehogs or other animals. We noticed that there isn't any bird/ squirrel feeders, bug hotels or bat boxes to support and promote an eco-friendly environment for minibeasts and to encourage birds or squirrels.**



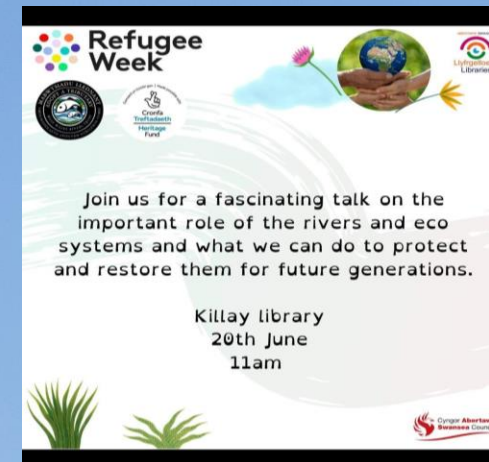
**Wooden play area using off cuts of fallen trees to support the sustainability of the area.**



**Bird and squirrel feeder: Provides a stable source of nutrition and encourages the bird and squirrel population in the area.**



**Community events to support and encourage in the local areas sustainability.**



## Conserving in our garden...



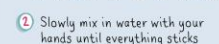
### How to make seed bombs



#### You will need:

- Meadow flower seeds or seeds collected from the garden
- Peat-free compost
- Water
- Powdered clay (from craft shops - use clay soil if you can't find any)
- Mixing bowl

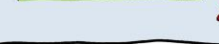
1 In a bowl, mix together 1 cup of seeds with 5 cups of compost and 2-3 cups of clay powder.



2 Slowly mix in water with your hands until everything sticks together, then roll mixture into firm balls.



3



4 Now for the fun bit - plant by throwing your seed bombs at bare parts of the garden!



[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

We made wildseed bombs using the wildlife watch instructions. We threw the bombs into an unused part of the back of the garden and will wait 40-60 days for growth.



We installed a bird house to give birds a warm, safe place to rest and breed. Having plenty of safe places to nest will encourage birds of different varieties if birds to return to the garden year after year encouraging diversity. We ensured the house was high up (at least 5ft off the ground) due to predators. It was also fixed to a sturdy tree.

The children enjoyed making the bird box and painting it, knowing they made a house for birds to live and keep warm. It encouraged creativity and fine motor skills as well as providing an understanding of how we can help birds in our environment.



Share....

← Post



Natalie R  
@MylesNatalie

We undertook the [#JohnMuirAward](#) in our local park. The children discovered, explored, conserved and now we are sharing  
The children have loved undertaking the various activities and we have discussed how we can help support the promotion of conservation in our area.



11:09 · 26 Jun 24

*We decided to share what we had learnt and discovered when undertaking the John Muir award on the social media platform X to promote how everyone can participate and help conserve.*



*The children did show and tell in school to show and share with others what they had learnt and the activities they had participated in.*



*We have decided to join the Aberavon beach clean and comb with Neath Port Talbot Council to not only connect with nature but contribute to sustaining nature around us. We will be posting photos on the social media platform Facebook during and after the activity to promote active participation in conservation.*



## Reflection.....

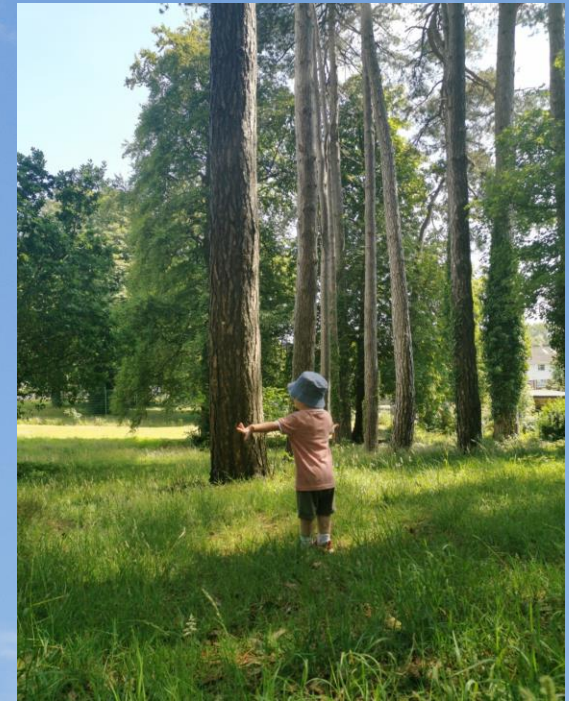


*Creating curiosity, awe  
and wonder for nature around  
us.*

*Since undertaking this journey of discovery, i am a firm believer that encouraging the next generation to be proactive in the approaches toward the environment and its survival is invaluable to the future of our planet and that one person can make a difference. I appreciate the enjoyment nature provides us as a family as well as the satisfaction of helping to conserve. Conserving through the installation of a bird box, and scattering wildflower seeds has given my children a sense of achievement. The John Muir award has provided me with a passion for promoting the environment and instilling the respect we all should have for it to my children and others.*



*The sun is shining  
The sky is blue  
The birds are flying  
And the breeze is so  
cool.  
Mother nature is  
trying her best  
To give nothing but  
beautiffulness  
But what do we do?  
Make her a mess.  
Let's make her the  
best  
By polluting less and  
less  
And preserve her  
green dress  
For our children and  
the rest.*



*Appreciating the w  
onders of nature*