Sustainability in the early years

John Muir Award

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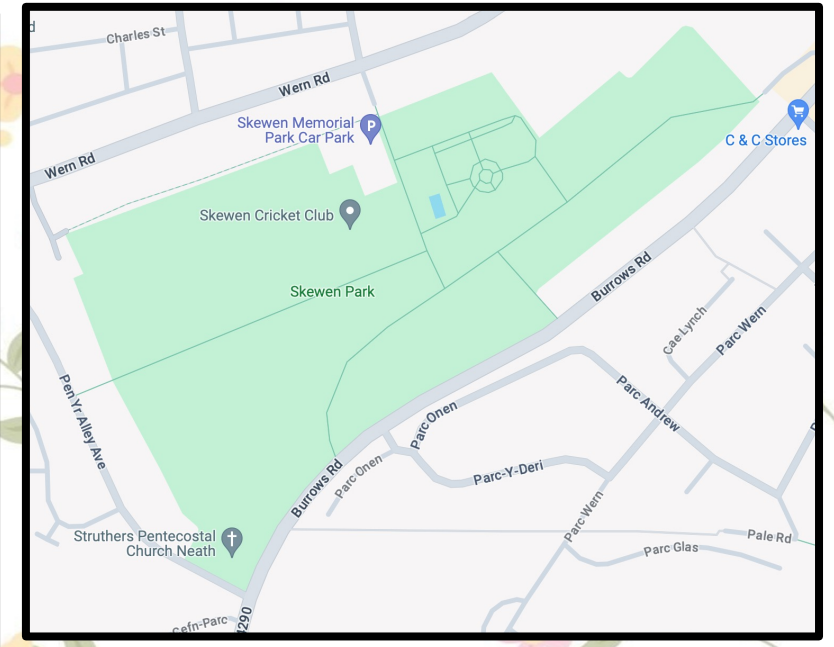
Discover

I have chosen Skewen Park as my focus area. It is conveniently close to where I live, allowing for regular visits. I also have a personal connection to the park, as I walk my dog, Rio, here every day. This frequent interaction enables me to observe and appreciate the parks natural beauty and the changes in undergoes throughout the seasons.

Skewen Park offers something for all ages. It features a playground and a swimming pool for children, as well as benches for older visitors who want to sit and enjoy the serene environment. The park's rich natural environment includes diverse plant life, wildlife and beautiful landscapes.

For my John Muir Award, Skewen Park holds special significance due to my deep appreciation for its natural surroundings. My ongoing relationship with the park makes it a meaningful and inspiring location for this project.







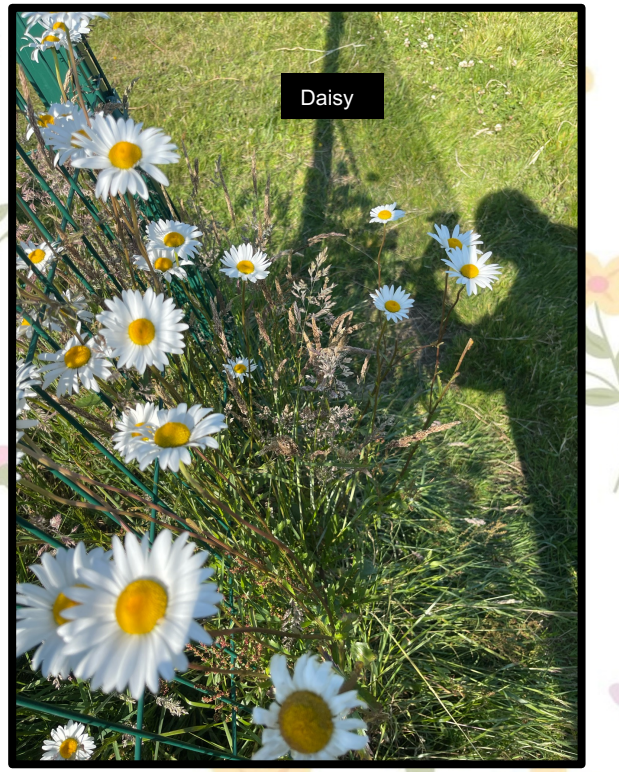




Explore

My focus point will be on flowers.

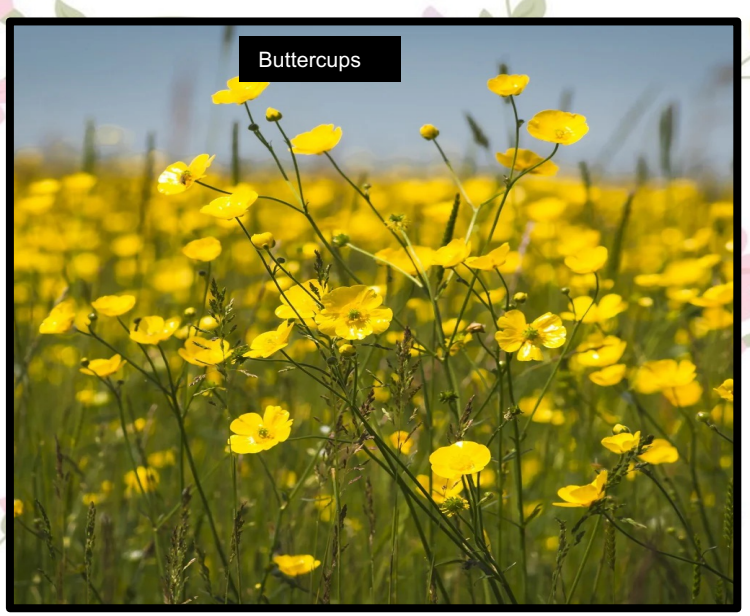
Here are the flowers I discovered while exploring. I have identified some of the ones I found.



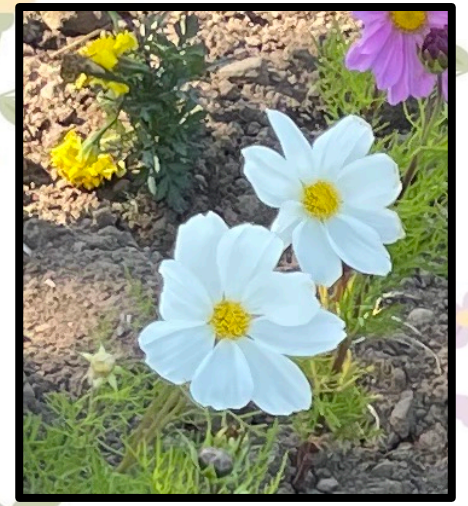














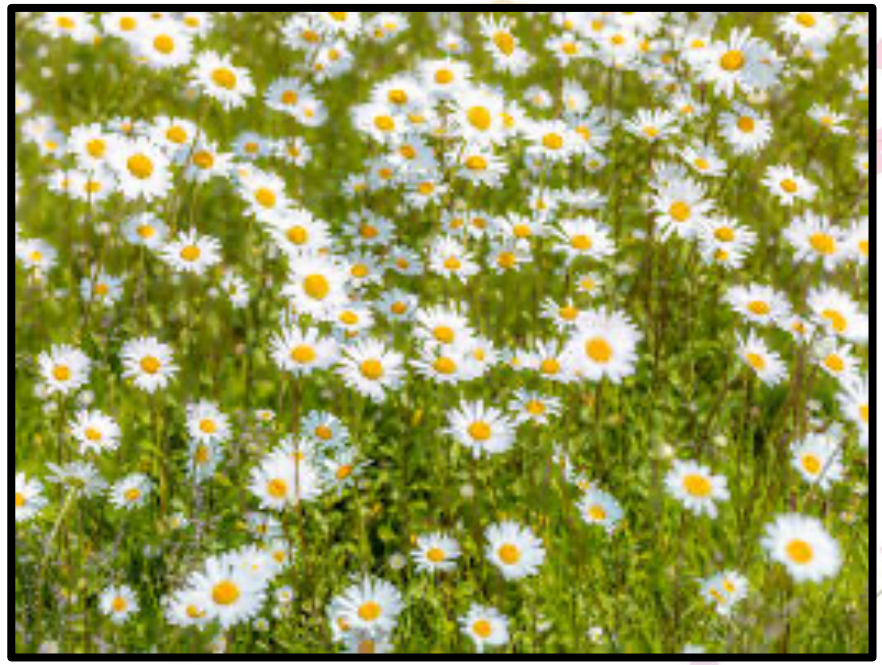
The bright colours on the flowers bring me a sense of joy and happiness when I walk past them. I feel like the colours radiate positivity, making me feel uplifted.







What I have learned about the flowers...



Daisy's attract bees, butterflies and beetles.





Cosmos are among the best bedding plants for attracting bees.



Buttercups use light to attract insects. Their shiny petals absorb blue-green light while reflecting yellow and UV light. The reflected yellow light gives buttercups their bright colour, which is why they are often used in the classic childhood game to see if you " like butter". Simply hold a buttercup under your chin, and your skin reflects yellow, it means you like butter.





I could smell freshly cut grass.

Litter



During my walk around Skewen Park, I discovered litter, which made me feel sad especially since I noticed plenty of bins around the park. I also noticed vandalised signs that emphasised the importance of cleaning up after pets.







Positively, I did not notice any dog poo around the park!!

Wildlife

Here is the wildlife I observed while exploring Skewen Park.



While exploring Skewen Park in the past , I have spotted a hedgehog hiding in the longer grass. It made me sad to think that the hedgehog had nowhere safe to go to protect itself from predators like foxes.





At Skewen Park, crows are a common sight, often seen praying on worms in the grassy areas, or high up in the trees.



Bees are facing threat of extinction, with pesticides being one of the key threats.



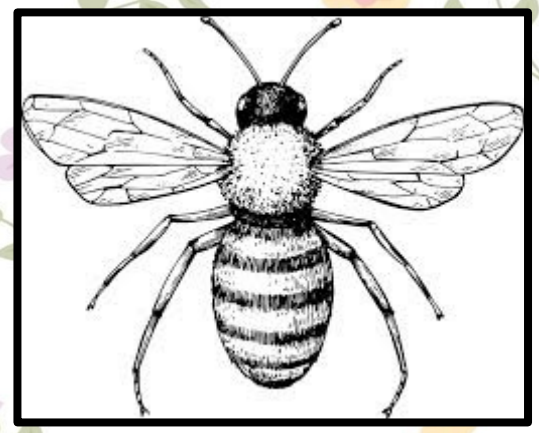
Skewen Park has a variety of minibeasts, each contributing to the rich biodiversity of the environment. These small creatures can be found in different areas of the park, from the grassy fields to the shaded woodlands, enhancing the ecological balance of the park.





I discovered a sign indicating that Skewen Park, part of the Neath Port Talbot Council, is included in the Bee Friendly Communities initiative.







Conserve

My focus point will be on preserving the flowers.

1. I have written a short story about conserving the flowers at Skewen Park because it saddens me to think that some people do not appreciate the beauty of them. Through my story, I hope to highlight the importance of preserving and cherishing the vibrant flowers that are at the park, ensuring they can be enjoyed by everyone.

2. As part of my efforts to conserve the flowers in Skewen Park, I have created posters to display around the park featuring a memorable and catchy rhyme. This bright and eye-catching poster will be displayed in the park to grab the attention of visitors. This sign can be seen as part of the story.

3. In addition to raising awareness, I have also planted sunflower, lavender, and bluebell seeds to attract more minibeasts to the park. These plants will not only enhance the park's aesthetical appeal but also create a thriving habitat for bees, butterflies and other insects. By contributing to the park's biodiversity, it provides educational opportunities for visitors to learn about the vital role these creatures play in our environment.

A story about conserving the flowers

Once upon a time in the town of Skewen, there was a lovely place called Skewen Park, which had beautiful flowers.



One day, a girl named Molly and her classmates visited the park and noticed that some flowers were drooping and floppy.
Molly turned to the park keeper, with a frown. “Why are the flowers getting trampled and picked?” she asked, her voice tinged with concern.
The park keeper sighed gently and and explained ”Sometimes, people accidently step on the flowers or pick them. This makes it harder for the flowers to grow”.

Molly’s heart sank. In school that week, she had learnt about how bees rely on flowers for pollen to make honey. She knew how important flowers were for bees and seeing them harmed made her feel deeply sad



Molly had an idea to help save the flowers.
She suggested in making posters to remind people to be careful.
She thought of a catchy rhyme to put on the poster, which went:

”Stay on the paths, don’t pick or tread,
Let the flowers grow instead.
Water, weed and plant with care,
So, bees and blooms are everywhere”



Stay on the paths, don’t pick or tread,
Let the flowers grow instead.
Water, weed and plant with care,
So, blooms and bees are everywhere.

Soon, the posters were displayed all around the park to help protect and conserve the flowers.







With her sign to protect the flowers, Molly was eager to do more. She asked her teacher for help in researching which flowers bees and butterflies like. Together, they discovered that bees and butterflies are attracted to flowers like sunflowers, lavender and bluebells.
Excitedly, Molly and the park keeper planted these flowers in the park to help attract and support these important pollinators.











Here is where they are planted.

Soon, many people from the Skewen community joined in. Visitors to the park became more careful around the flowers, and the park blossomed even more beautifully.

The end.









Share

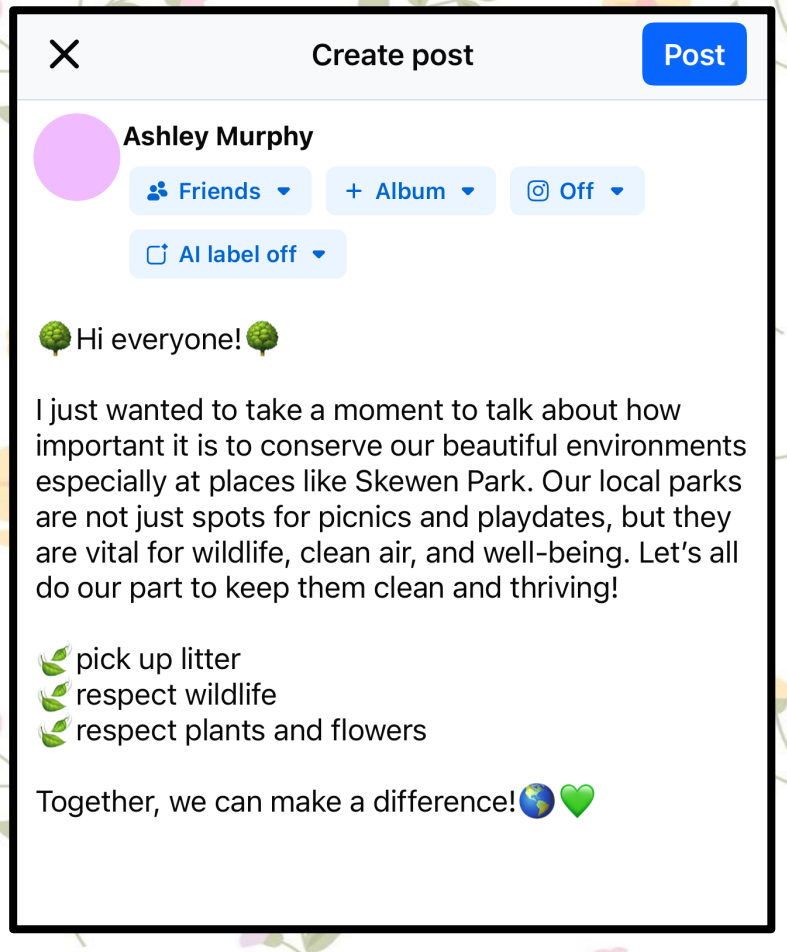
1. I will share what I have done with the lectures at university. I will do this by sharing my findings and activities related to the conservation of Skewen Park. I will also present a personal reflection of how the John Muir Award deepened my appreciation for the environment.

2. I will share the story I wrote about conserving Skewen Park, with the children in my setting. I will relate the key themes of sustainability and link it to their local area. This will give them ideas of how to enhance the environment and how to look after it.

3. I will use social media as a powerful platform to share what I have learnt and what I have done to help the conservation of Skewen Park. By using various social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, I can reach a broad and diverse audience. I plan to create engaging posts that highlight the importance of preserving the outdoors.







Reflection

Completing the John Muir Award made me reflect on my childhood and how I used to appreciate the beauty of the environment. As a child, I would spend time turning over logs in the garden to find minibeasts like worms and woodlouse's and taking great joy in watering plants. These simple activities allowed me to connect with nature and brought me a sense of happiness. The act of conserving flowers at Skewen Park brought back memories of my younger self eagerly exploring the garden and trying to keep minibeasts safe. I believe that through the John Muir Award, I was able to rediscover this deep appreciation for the environment.

To conclude, I feel that participating in the John Muir Award has been an enriching experience. This award has not only deepened my appreciation for the natural world but also instilled a sense of responsibility towards environmental conservation. The hands-on approach made me realize the significant impact we can have on our local environment.



















