ECEY6005 - Sustainability in the Early Years

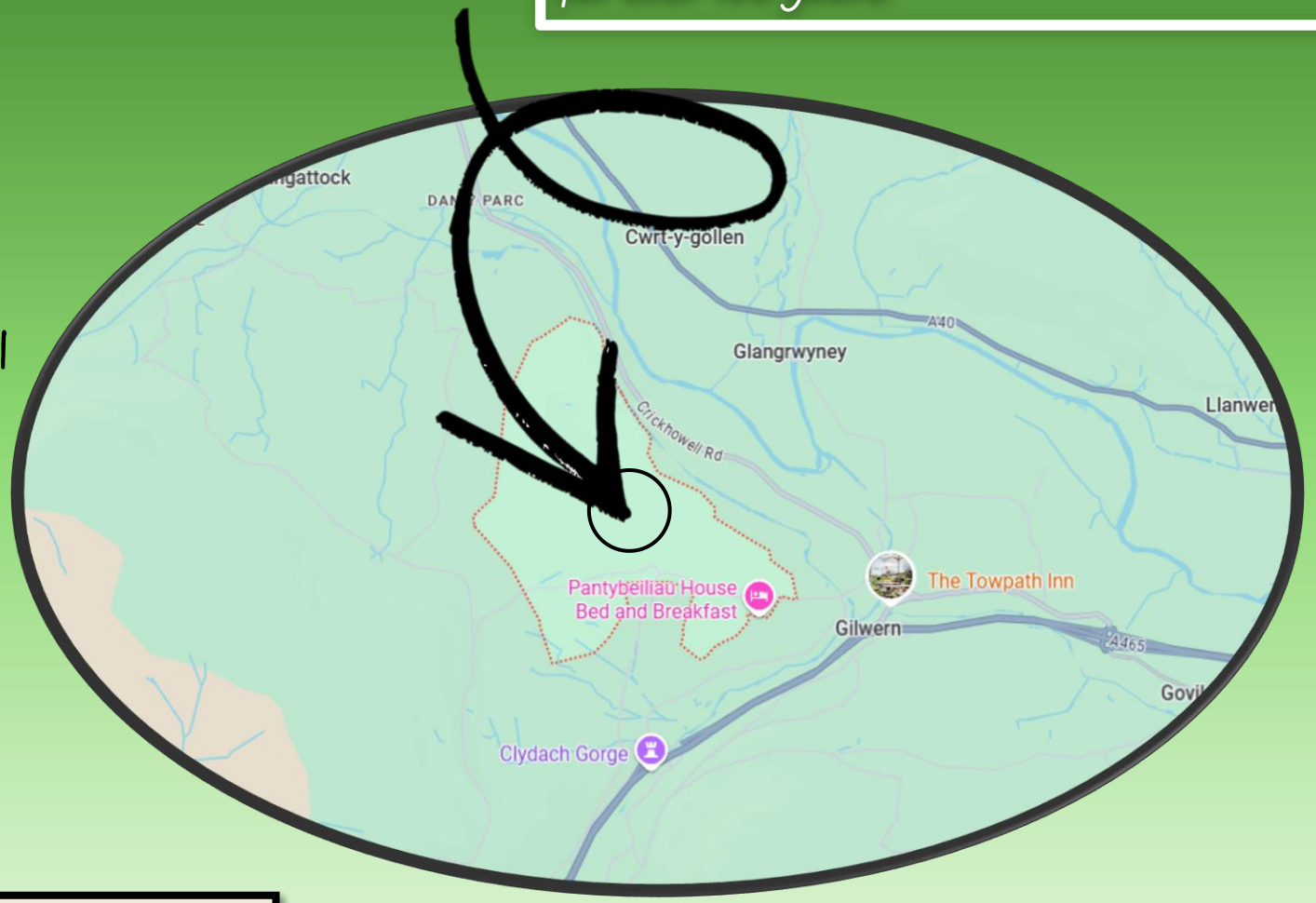
Our Family Farm

John Muir – Who is he and what did he do to conserve and protect the wild?

John Muir was an enthusiastic conservationist who fought to save America's wilderness areas. In addition to founding the Sierra Club and contributing to the creation of national parks like Yosemite and Sequoia, he wrote motivational nature books. Through his writing and advocacy, John Muir inspired others to appreciate the significance and beauty of nature. His work paved the way for contemporary environmental conservation and helped launch the national park movement.

I have been lucky enough to spend my childhood on our family farm - particularly helping in the garden. I'm passionate about making it look the best that it can and growing a range of fruit and vegetables. As a family, we feel very strongly about 'farm to fork' ideology.
As I've got older, life has become more hectic, so whilst gaining the John Muir Award, I feel very grateful to have had the time to sit back and appreciate our farm garden again and reminisce the wonderful childhood that I had growing up here.

Our farm is located in the heart of Gilwern, Monmouthshire. The farm has been in our family for over 100 years.



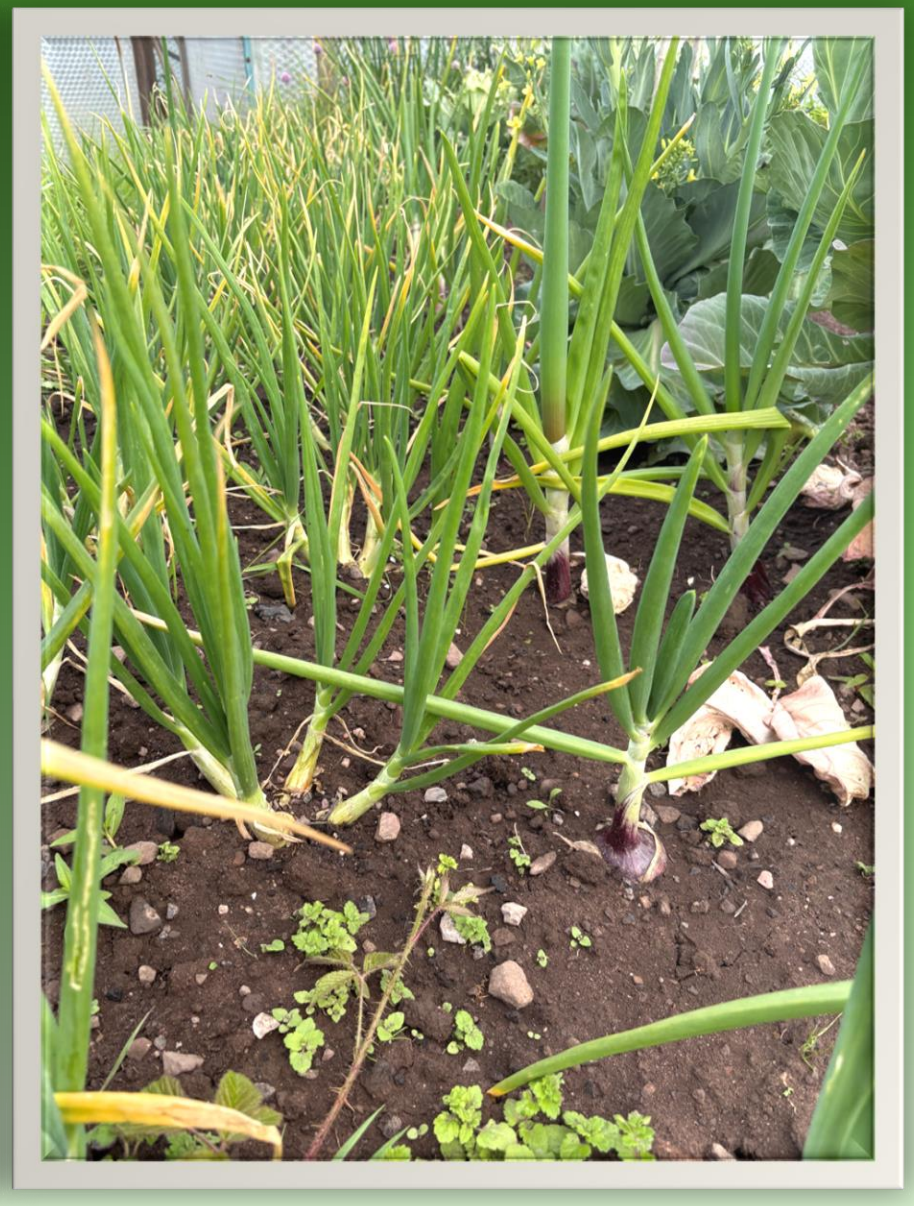
DISCOVER

We have almost 99 acres of land, agricultural outbuildings, a kitchen garden, a working garden, orchard, barns, polytunnels, lambing shed, sheep sheds, and ancient earthworks.

EXPLORE

The garden is made up of many fruits and vegetables including peas, beans, blackcurrants, raspberries, strawberries, rhubarb, lettuce, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, shallots, gooseberries and tomatoes.

Potatoes



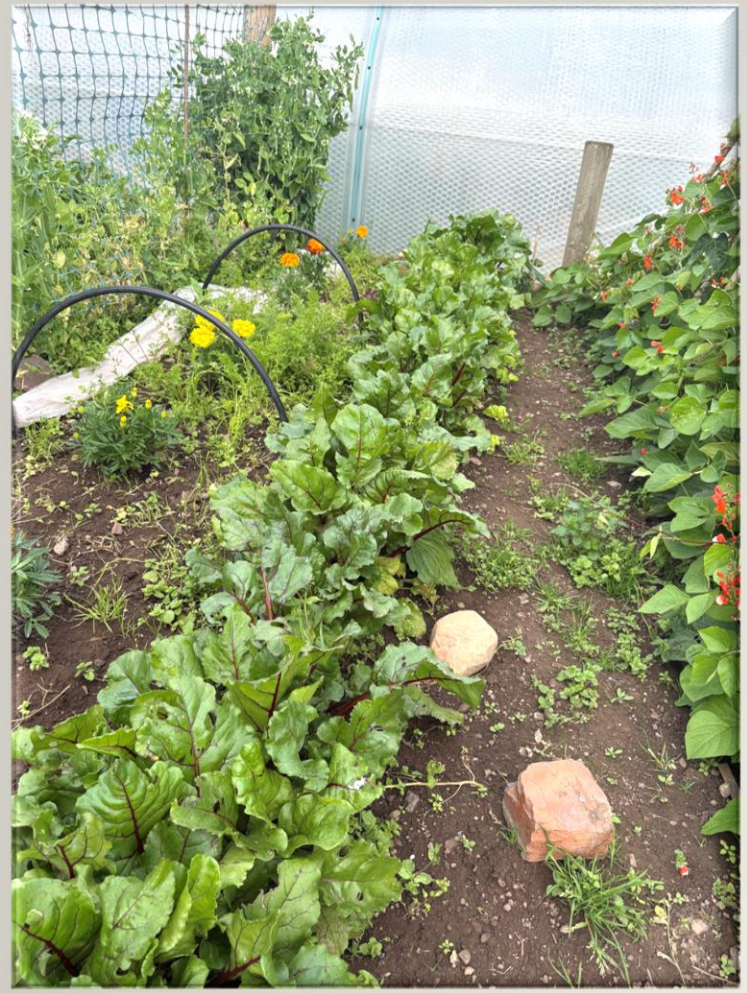
Onions

Lettuce

Tomatoes

Beans

Cabbage



Beetroot

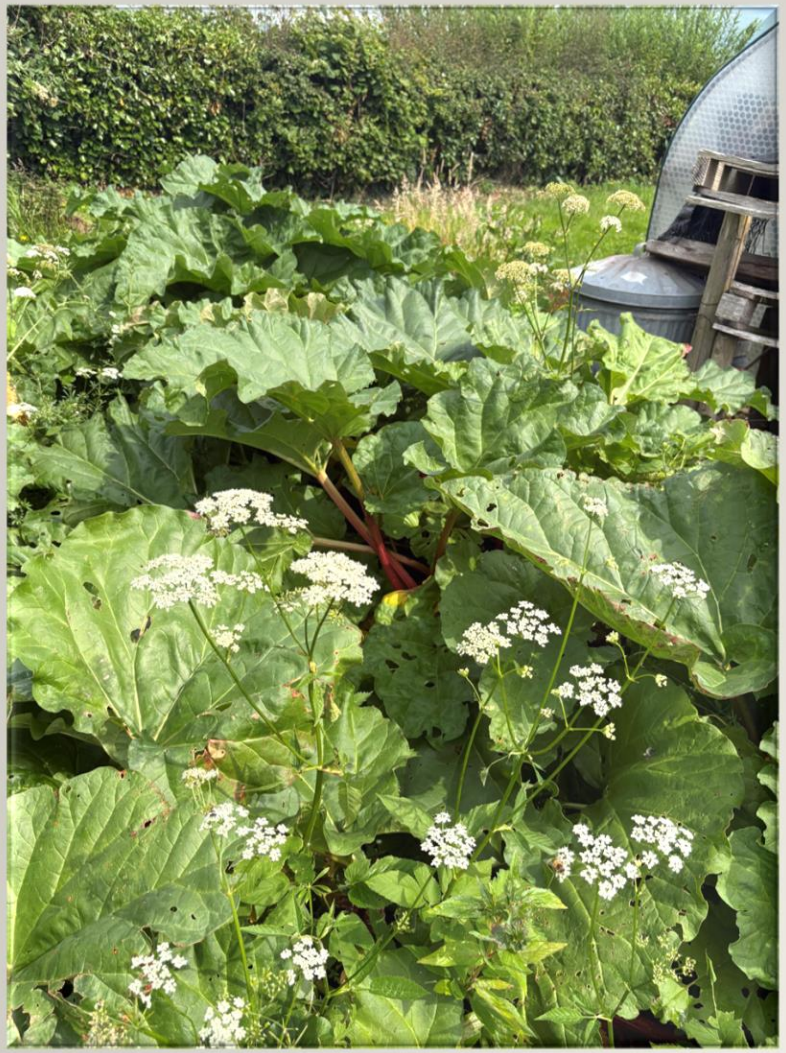
Peas

Gooseberries

Raspberries

Blackcurrants

Onions & Shallots



Rhubarb

Strawberries

Exploring the orchard

Cherries

Pears

Apples

Beautiful flowers blooming in the garden

Sitting in the garden for the first time in a while...
allowed me to reflect and write a poem.

The Garden grew me Too.

I sit in the hush of afternoon light,
In the distance, the Sugarloaf mountain
stands so bright.
It watches over, so calm and grand,
Above this loved patch of cherished land.

I've spent a life here with soil-stained
hands,
Through seasons' turn and times' demands.
Each life and bloom, I've come to know,
This special place where all things grow.

Birds sing and twirl through skies so
blue,
They dance like dreams the wind blows
through.
Petals bloom in soft delight,
Each colour kissed by the golden sunlight.

Blackcurrants swell in clustered grace,
Raspberries climb with sweet embrace.
Peas and beans in rows appear,
Rhubarb stalks stand tall and clear.

Time drifts slow, like the clouds above,
Wrapped in stillness, peace and love.
This garden holds my roots, my start,
A lifelong home within my heart.

The sound of birds tweeting as I wrote my poem

Hover and press play

Whilst writing my poem, I noticed that there were many swallows and swifts flying above the garden, so I decided to do a little research.

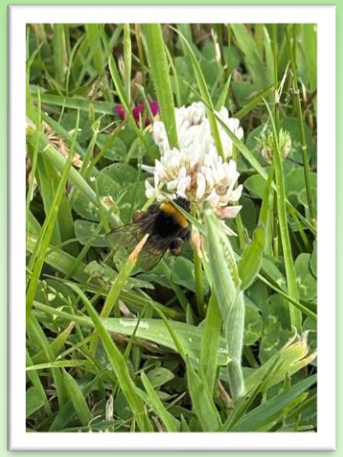
Every year, swallows with their forked tails and shimmering feathers return to the same nest, frequently to the same barn beam or rooftop. Particularly at dusk, when they glide low over fields capturing insects in mid-air, these friendly, chatty birds enjoy quick bursts of chatter.

Swifts are more mysterious. They don't even land to rest; they can sleep while flying and go months at a time without landing. In late spring, they appear like shadows, singing happily overhead in small, confined groups, and by the end of the summer, they are always in hurry.

Hover and press play

CONSERVE

Whilst we already have wildflowers in our garden for wildlife to enjoy, we only have a small patch currently. In the garden, wildflowers are important because they provide food for pollinators such as butterflies and bees. They give insects and small animals a place to live. Additionally, wildflowers contribute vibrant, natural colour to outdoor areas and maintain the health of the soil.



A small patch of wildflower that we currently have

An area of the garden that wasn't being used. I have now raked over this part of the garden and spread wildflower seed to help conserve our bees.