



ECEY6005

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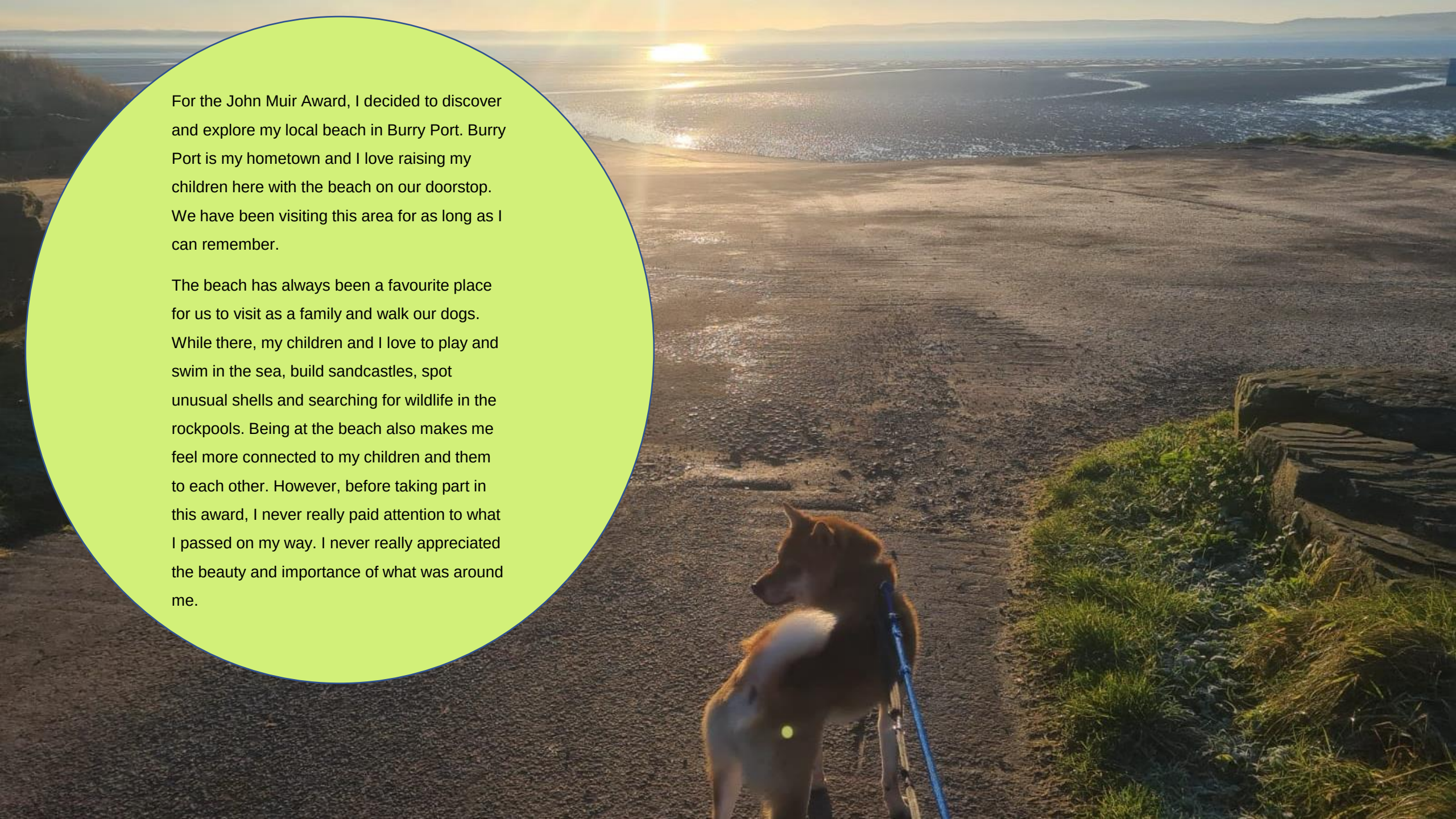
Sustainability in the early years

John Muir Award

Discover



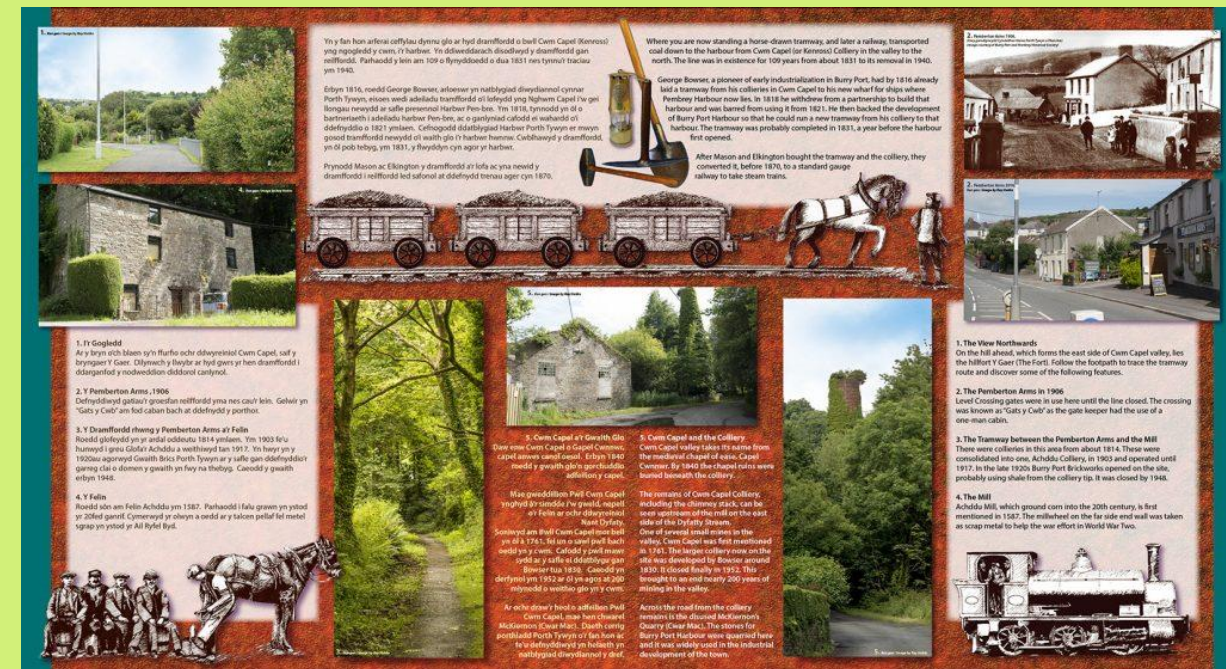
Burry Port

A scenic view of a beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the water and the wet sand. In the foreground, a dog with brown and white fur is standing on a path, looking out towards the beach. The path is made of dark gravel or sand. To the right of the path, there is a grassy area with some rocks. The beach is wide and flat, with the water lapping at the shore in the distance.

For the John Muir Award, I decided to discover and explore my local beach in Burry Port. Burry Port is my hometown and I love raising my children here with the beach on our doorstep. We have been visiting this area for as long as I can remember.

The beach has always been a favourite place for us to visit as a family and walk our dogs. While there, my children and I love to play and swim in the sea, build sandcastles, spot unusual shells and searching for wildlife in the rockpools. Being at the beach also makes me feel more connected to my children and them to each other. However, before taking part in this award, I never really paid attention to what I passed on my way. I never really appreciated the beauty and importance of what was around me.

The Tramway



Explore

In order to get to the beach, we must first walk down the Tramway in Burry Port. Here is a little of the history.

On our walk through the tramway we spotted bees, birds and spiders. They were peacefully going about their day and it was lovely to hear the birds sing.





We found some mushrooms growing on a tree. These trees were sadly cut down for health and safety issues in the area. However, we discovered that the growth and feeding of mushrooms on rotten wood is beneficial as it results in a breakdown of wood which returns its component matter to the soil to enrich it.

Lichens are an excellent way of indicating the of air quality in the area. They absorb everything around them like air, water, pollutants, and nutrients. Lichens are created when two organisms, an alga and a fungus, form a connection. The alga that lichen contains determines its colour.





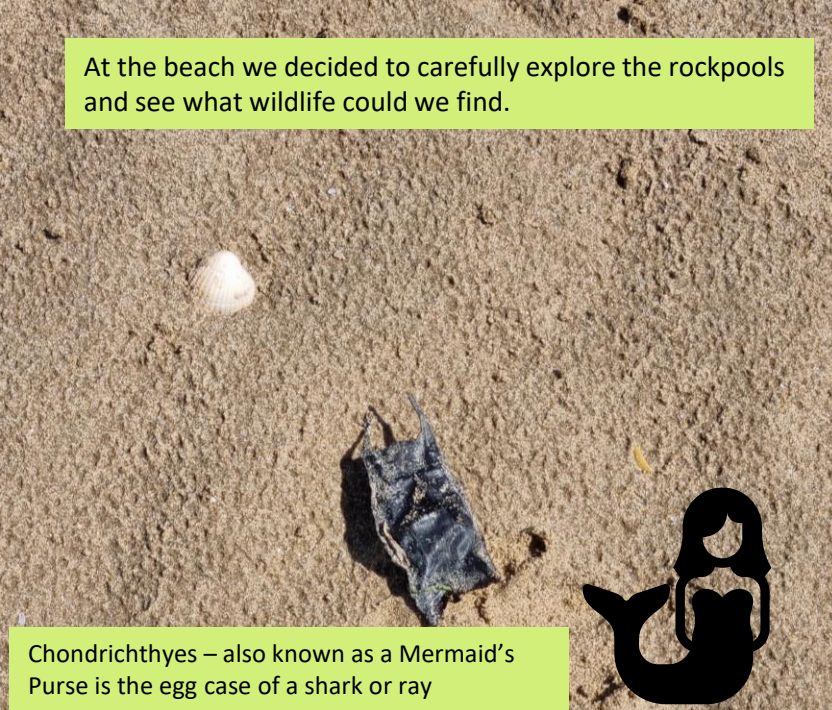
Some drawings by myself and my daughter Megan of flowers and insects we saw on our walk to the beach.



We passed a local pond and saw a mother duck with her ducklings. We also saw a swan searching for food. We also spotted Algae in the water and conducted some research as I thought it may be harmful.

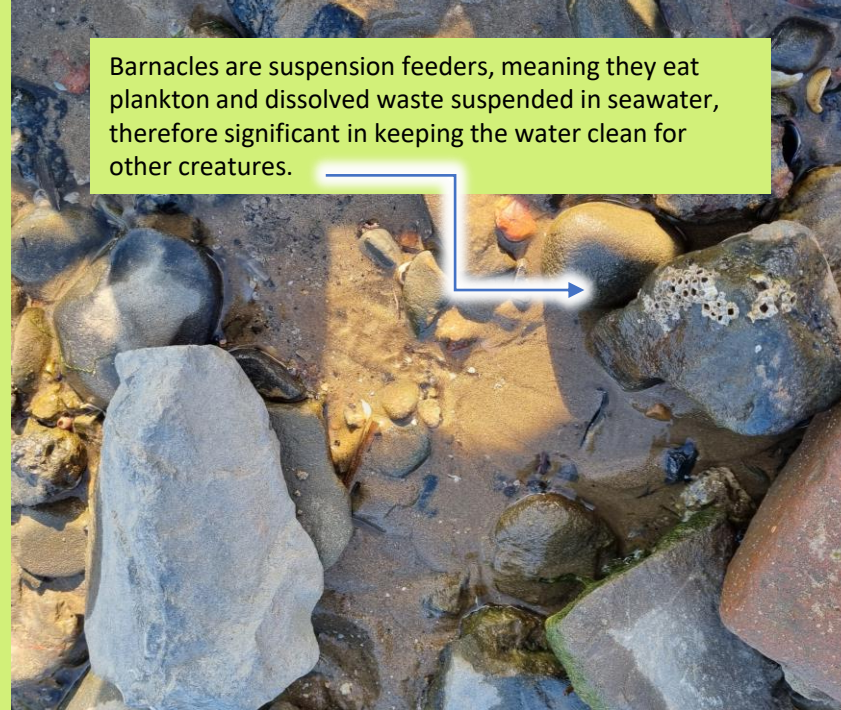
Algae is a natural component of any organic pond ecosystem. It's an indication of a healthy ecosystem.

At the beach we decided to carefully explore the rockpools and see what wildlife could we find.



Chondrichthyes – also known as a Mermaid's Purse is the egg case of a shark or ray

Barnacles are suspension feeders, meaning they eat plankton and dissolved waste suspended in seawater, therefore significant in keeping the water clean for other creatures.



We loved the patterns on this shell.

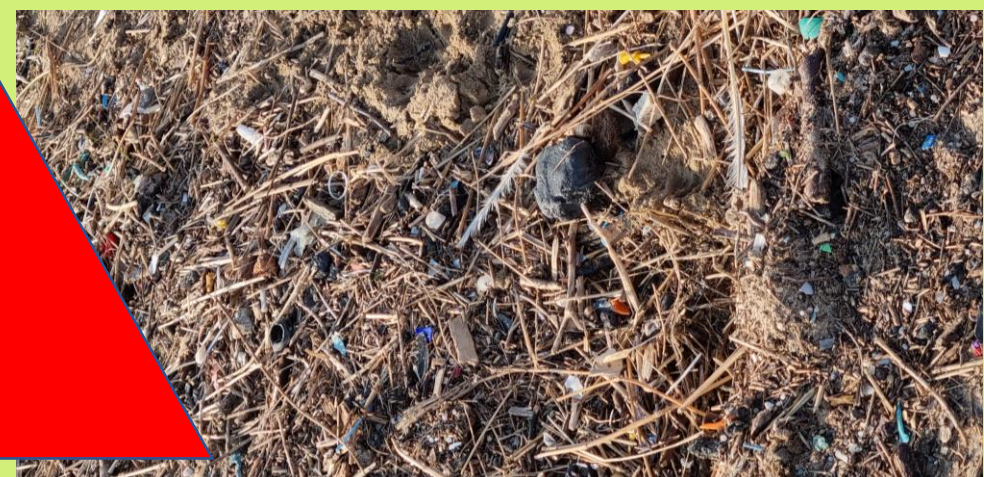


A quick crab burrowing in the sand!

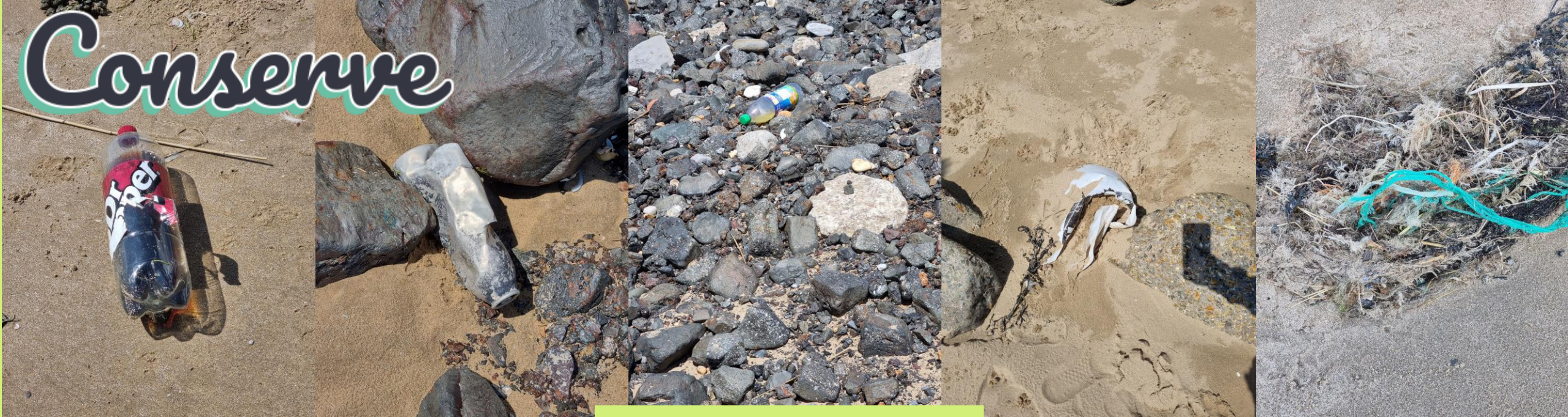
There was so much litter. This motivated me to help with litter collection in order to preserve the area's beauty and protect the wildlife.



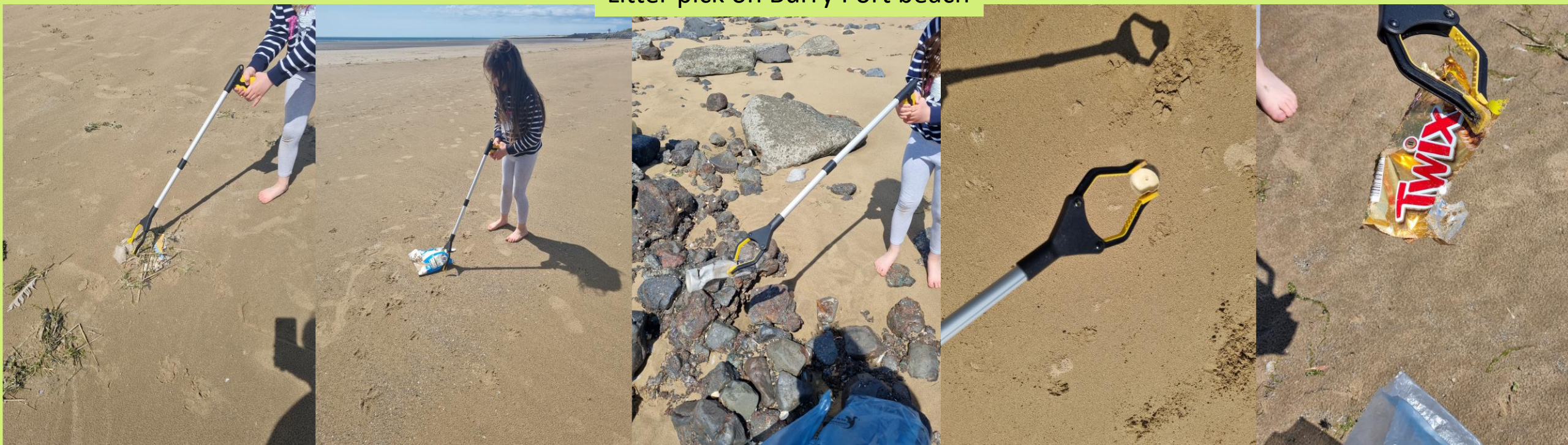
The amount of plastic rubbish that flows into the oceans every year is expected to nearly triple by 2040 to 29 million metric tons.



Conserve



Litter pick on Burry Port beach





We disposed of the litter correctly.

Did you know?

If we want to leave our earth to future generations, we must recycle. It is ecologically responsible because we are recycling old products that are no longer useful and making them useful again. Reprocessing rubbish to create new products has led to a massive reduction of waste worldwide.

Can we go the beach?

I want to explore!

Can we see what's on the ocean floor?

I want to feel sand in between my toes,

I want the sea air to tingle my nose.

I want to look in the shallow rock pool.

Don't worry, I'll follow the seashore rules.

Next to a rock I spot a crab,

But why does he look so sad and drab?

What's wrong little crab?

Why are you glum?

I can't move my claws for they're stuck in gum!

In gum? Oh My! From where did it come?

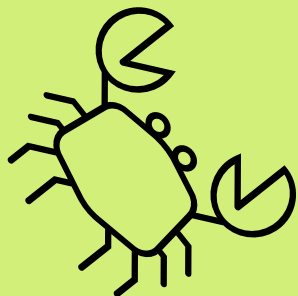
From the people outside enjoying the sun.

The tide will come in and take everything in sight.

We sea creatures have such a fright.

Our home and food is filled with pollution,

From what was once tranquil now needs a solution.



Can we go to the beach?

Can we go to the beach?

I want to explore!

Can we see what's on the ocean floor?

I can feel bottle tops in between my toes,

The smell of smoke tingles my nose.

I try to look in the shallow rock pools,

But people haven't followed the seashore rules.

Next to the rocks I spot a tin.

Why is there? It should be in the bin!

People visit the beach to enjoy the sun,

But leave all their rubbish when their fun is done.

The tide will come in and take everything in sight.

We must work together to stop this spite.

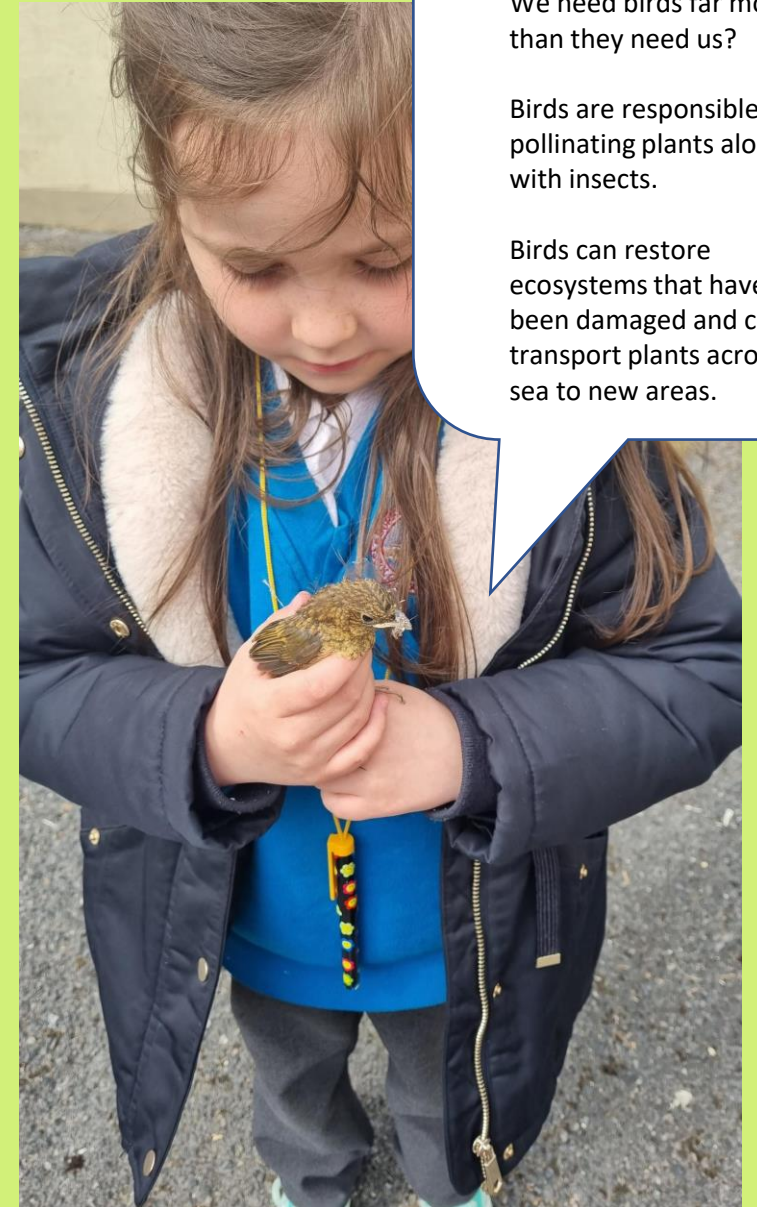
The sea creatures' home is filled with pollution.

So what is our solution?

We need the sea to balance the carbon cycle,

All we ask is for you to care and recycle!





We found a baby bird covered in cobwebs unable to fly. It seemed the bird had attempted to get food from discarded rubbish but was caught in a web along the way. After helping the bird and watching it fly off safely, this further pushed us to clear the litter we found but to also make a bird feeding area out of an old bottle of juice which I would have normally put in the bin to help prevent the birds from trying to go through rubbish bags.

Did you know?

We need birds far more than they need us?

Birds are responsible for pollinating plants along with insects.

Birds can restore ecosystems that have been damaged and can transport plants across the sea to new areas.

Making a bird feeder

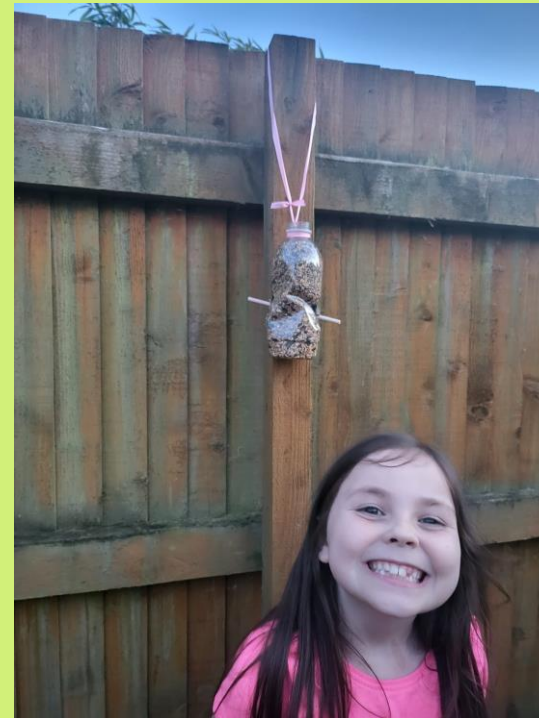
You will need a plastic bottle, scissors and sticks/ice-lolly sticks.



Carefully cut holes in the bottle large enough for the sticks and for birds to access the food.



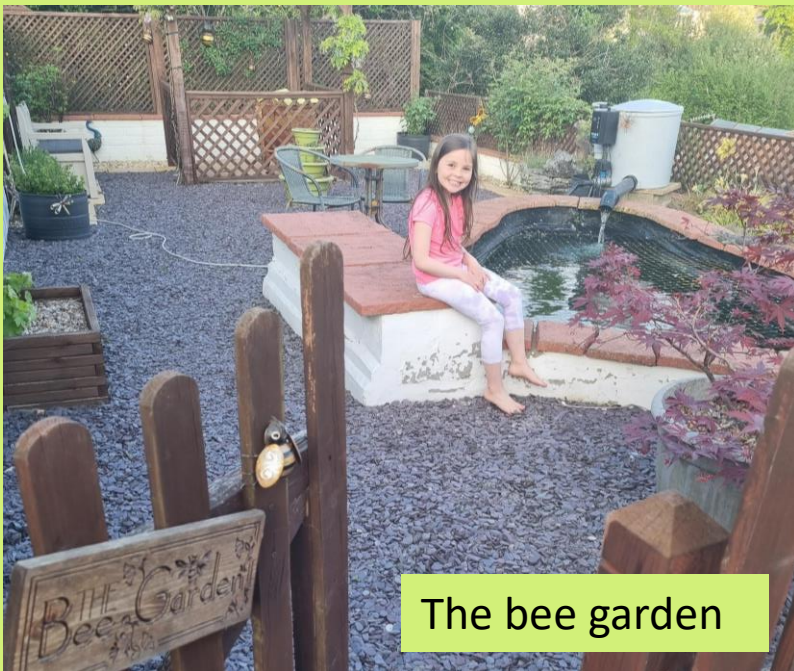
Fill the bottle with bird seed and tie string around the top.



Hang your bird feeder high up and watch the birds arrive!



After finding and helping the little bird, we decided to make a bird feeder that we could hang up high to keep little birds safe from litter on the ground.



The bee garden



On our way back home, we passed more bees and nettles. I wondered what I could teach my daughter about these 2 things. Wildlife that I would usually avoid suddenly seemed appealing. My daughter's grandmother is a bee keeper and we decided to pay her a visit. We collected some nettles and observed as she gathered honey from the bees. This was fascinating to observe. Once we had gathered some honey we decided to make sweetened nettle tea.



Can you spot the Queen Bee?

Bees are necessary for both pollinating the food we need to survive and pollinating many of the trees and flowers that give wildlife habitat.



Delicious local honey from the busy bees!

Nettle and Honey Tea



Ingredients

- 1 cup of nettles
- 4 cups of water
- 1 tbsp of sugar or honey (optional)

Method

- STEP 1** Find some nettles and cut off the leaves with as little stem as possible (the older looking nettles are sweeter). Fill up a cup full and wash them thoroughly in warm water. Put the nettles in a large saucepan with 4 cups of water and add the sugar or honey.
- STEP 2** Put the pan on the hob and bring to the boil, then simmer for 15 minutes. Taste the tea and add any more sugar if needed. Serve in mugs with a nettle for decoration. (BBC Good Food).

Did you know?

Nettles contain vitamin C, D and K



Did you know?

Consuming local honey and nettles can help prevent seasonal allergies.

Share

From my experience of undertaking the John Muir award, my knowledge of the connections between all living creatures and the environment has increased. I was appalled by the litter harming our environment and will continue to litter pick and raise awareness. Creating the bird feeder also taught me that once I have finished with an item in my home, I should consider alternative uses for it instead of just throwing it in the bin. Undertaking this award also made me feel proud of myself for overcoming a fear. Bees usually terrify me but after observing them working, researching and tasting their delicious honey, I now understand how important they are to us. I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in this award and believe it has changed my views on many environmental factors that I would have not really paid attention to beforehand.

I hope to share my poem and new knowledge to encourage people to realise that we can all improve and change the world for the better.

