

Sustainability in the Early Years:

Discover, Explore, Conserve & Share.



Figure 1 Ariel view of the area I have chosen – google maps. Fernlea, Risca, Caerphilly.

Figure 2 Lola resting in the field after her walk through the woodland area.

2021



Risca, is a rural area which is surrounded by extensively wooded hills, surrounded by Twmbarlwm and Mynydd Machen, I also overlook the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. Risca town was a coal mine industry, the area I am exploring is near terraced housing built for miners and a housing estate built in the 1960s for the Llanwern steelworks.

The area I have chosen to explore is a small woodland area with a pathway from the housing area leading to a field and children's play area. I often take this path with my loyal friend Lola when going out for walks. I always rush through the woodland area, it is dark and overgrown, it's now time to discover, explore, conserve and share.

Discover



I often walk in my local area; the area is very green with lots of trees on the mountains with local woodlands. I often walk along the canal and observe this area, following my walk through the woodland.

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Discover



I have always found this area of woodlands next to where I live very dark, green, and overgrown. I have always walked the same pathway through and often on my own when taking Lola for a walk. There are lots of tall trees, ferns, and stinging nettles, these are the things I have observed, and it has made me feel eerie. I always rush through to the field area and walk back along the canal.

Explore



Exploring the area overtime, I discovered many bugs, mostly flying bugs, flies, wasps, and bees. It also took me back to my childhood, discovering frothy spittle, we used to call it 'cuckoo spit'.



I have always had a fear of Bee's when I hear the buzzing! It took me back to my memories of running away as a child.

Exploring my new surroundings, my curiosity of Bee's grew, I watched them in the native flowers for a while, on the edge of the woodland, area collecting the pollen.

Buzzy Bee, Buzzy Bee, please do not sting me,

I have learnt if I leave you be, you will leave me be,

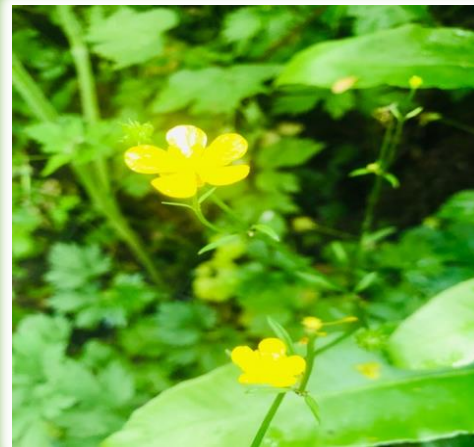
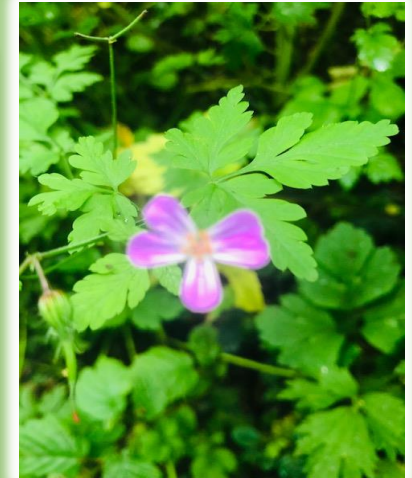
Visit the flowers for pollen and nectar, for your honey home to be.

Buzzy Bee, buzzy Bee, yellow and black,

you are quite clever; I never knew that!

Explore

This green, dark woodland has much life, with lots of colour and beautiful flowers, I had not noticed before exploring, spending time more time here and my curiosity has grown for this woodland area. I spent quite some time during my visits observing how these are living plants and how they conserve bugs.



Explore

I heard many birds in the woodland area and more so in the early morning or in the evenings when I visited. The calling of the Wood Pigeon interested me, when visiting the area, it reminded me of my childhood and how we used to make up sentences on what they may be saying. I also went home and did some research with RSPB.



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Reflection

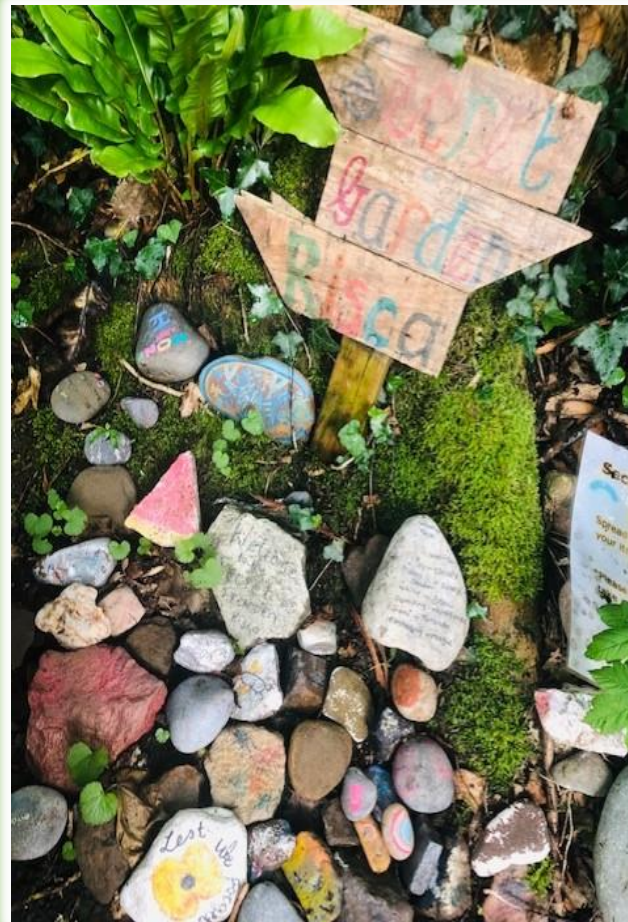
I started to reflect and observe I do not have birds visiting my garden, we have no trees. We made a bird table and purchased a bird feeder to encourage birds into the garden.

My friend the wood pigeons have visited, who often sit in my neighbour's tree. We have seen a robin too, however, it was too quick for me to take a photograph!



Discover

All the times I have walked through the woodland this is the first time I discovered the secret garden, developed during the pandemic on a small path leading from the main path I walk by a local group.



Hurry, hurry!

Walking quickly, I can feel something prickly, hurry, hurry, this place feels eerie.

Keep going, don't stop, don't look back, hurry, hurry, let's get back, on the open track.

Wild growth and dark shadows, hurry, hurry, I do not wish to seek into these shallows.

Sustainability, what is that? explore and discover? slowly, slowly, let's stop and observe and see what we recover.

What is that? It's so peaceful and quiet, slowly, slowly, I quite like that.

I hear a song, wild birds singing in the trees, slowly, slowly, I can hear the sound of buzzing bees.

I see birds come and go, slowly, slowly, look at the fox glove grow.

Lot of buzzing, oh look a blue bottle fly, slowly, slowly, what is that on a leaf, a ladybird exploring, I will leave it be, bye, bye.

How many spots does it have? I am learning and developing my maths!

I like exploring this place around me, no more hurry, hurry, just slowly, slowly.

I will conserve and look after this place, ensuring the wildlife around me has a place to embrace.



Explore



There are lots of tree's, different shapes, and sizes. Small, large, short, and tall.

Fallen leaves from autumn remain, I had not realised how tall some of the trees are, birds coming and going, and I even discovered a nest. The leaves supporting my learning of what trees were in the area.

I was curious to explore and learn how old the trees were had been living, growing in my new environment. I had enjoyed investigating and measuring the girth of different trees.



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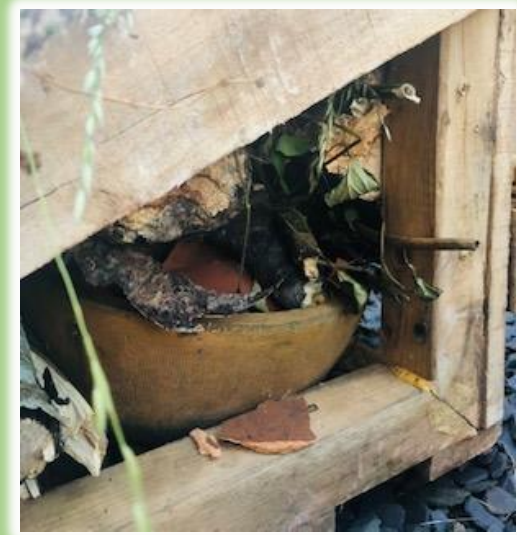
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Conserve

❖ Litter picking

❖ Bug hotel





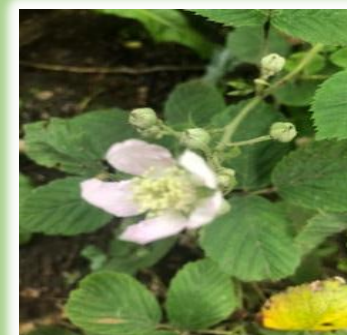
Bird feeder made from oranges and grapefruit filled with birdfeed and coconuts for the wild birds in the woodland area.



Conserve

Reflection

By undertaking the John Muir Award, I have discovered and learnt new things about the environment I explored, the living wildlife and the world around me. I connected with bugs and especially the Bee's! I wanted to conserve the area to ensure bugs had a habitat to continue to live and do their job. I also connected with the birds in the tall green tree's, their song and made bird feeders. By spending time in this natural woodland area, I also observed the impact on my well-being, my partner and daughters' interest to come with me when re-visiting. My partner's grandson helped to collect the natural resources in the woodland area to make the bug hotel and my daughter was also inspired when I introduced her to where the Bee's habitat was on the edge of the woodland, collecting pollen from the native plants. We also picked up litter and re-cycled the many plastic bottles we discovered. I will continue to conserve the area I discovered. I am curious to discover the changes each season, will the berries come on the blackberry plant and holly bush?



Reflection

“In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks” (John Muir, 1838-1914)

