

196033 Liz Barnsby

The Northern Meadows
in Whitchurch, Cardiff.



Discover...



I discovered these meadows during lockdown last year. They are one of the last meadows left in the south of Wales. The meadows are home to a huge variety of plants and animals.

It's equally as beautiful in the day as it is at night. I have been to these meadows in rain, wind and sunshine. It was a beautiful, almost secret green space. It helped me to reconnect to nature in such strange times. It has been such an important space to so many.



In the meadow of the valley,
Where wild flowers are roaming free.
There are multitudes of colors
And their backdrop forest greens.

There I sit and watch reflections
Of the clouds above the lake.
And the creatures drinking from it,
A deer, a swan, a snake.

To accentuate this beauty,
Are the mountains far away.
That rise above the woodlands,
“Look up” they seem to say.

While climbing one great mountain,
I see the meadow that’s below.
Looking even now more lovely,
Than when I was below.

So when you’re in a valley,
Looking up, you’ll want to climb.
But you’ll see that this new vision
Is no more lovely than what’s behind.

Let’s plan while on our front porch
As we both sip lemonade,
To go exploring in open meadows,
And leave behind this cooling shade!

Won’t you join me in my meadow?
Let’s delight in all we see.
And frolic in the sunshine,
As our love grows by degrees!

- Robert Edgar Burns



The Meadows has many plants including different trees, flowers and fungi.

Pictured are butter cups, coriolus hirsutus fungi, devil paintbrush flowers and chicken of the woods fungi (laetiporus sulphureus).

Explore...



At Christmas locals decorated tress with natural, biodegradable decorations.

We've built sculptures, including a giant butterfly to highlight their dropping numbers.

We even started a local samba band and the meadows were where we had our first practice.





However, the meadows are under threat. Local bodies want to develop on and destroy this beautiful and important area.

So a group of locals, and those like me slightly further afield has got organised and is fighting back.

#savethenorthenmeadows

Tall grass, many trees,
Birds flying high,
Insects scuttling by.

Clean air and space,
Time to set a slower pace.

A place to visit, for a lovely walk.

But for many other species,
This is home.
If the meadows vanish,
Where will they go?
Animals on endangered lists,
British wildlife vanishing.

Time to reflect on what is most
important.

Once the bulldozers come,
All of our precious wildlife will be
gone.



Sometimes a protest is needed to make your point heard. My wife and I have attended several protests at these meadows.



Conserve...

Protests at the meadows
gave me a passion for
justice, for taking a stand
and making myself heard.

'People are dying. Entire
ecosystems are collapsing.
We are in the beginning of
a mass extinction....
The world is waking up.
And change is coming,
whether you like it or not' -
Greta Thunberg



'If we don't take climate action,
the collapse of our civilisations
and the extinction much of the
natural world is on the horizon'
- Sir David Attenborough.



Protesting at the meadows gave me an opportunity to meet like minded individuals. They were part of Extinction Rebellion. After going to my first meeting I quickly became an active member. Creating lots of art, including placards, banners, murals and helping out at the print blocking and upcycling stall.



XR Cardiff Arts



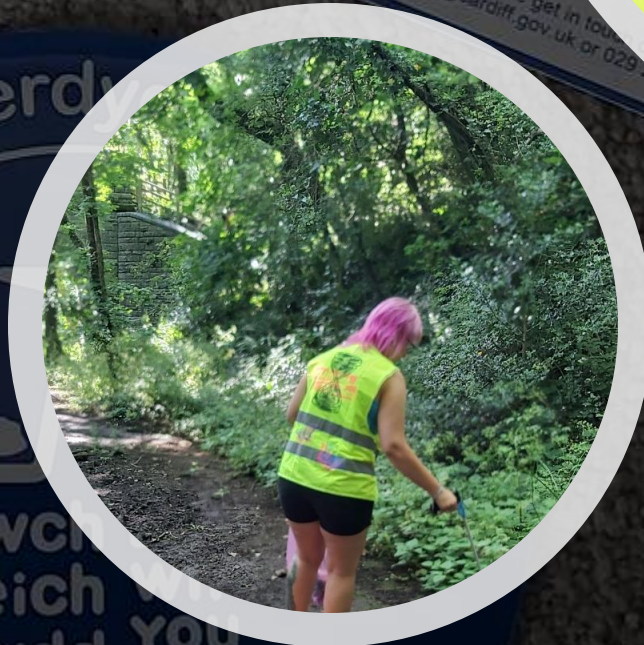
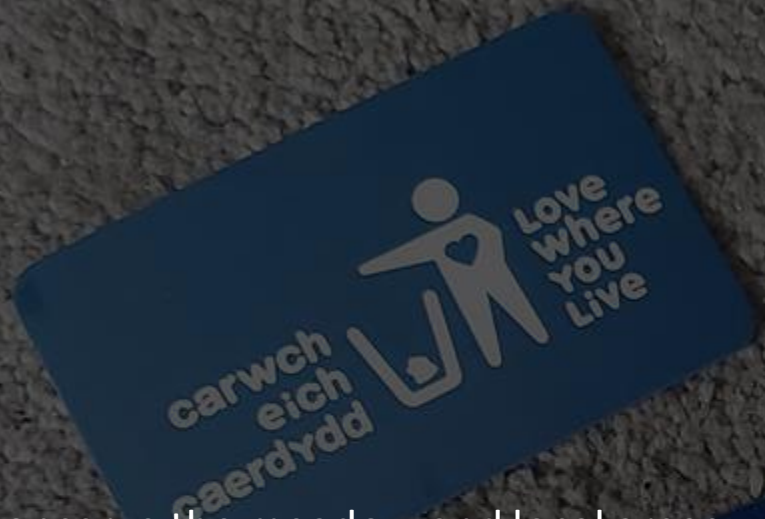
Most recently I and 400+ rebels
went to protest at the G7
summit.



To help conserve the meadow and local areas my wife and I have been on many litter picks.

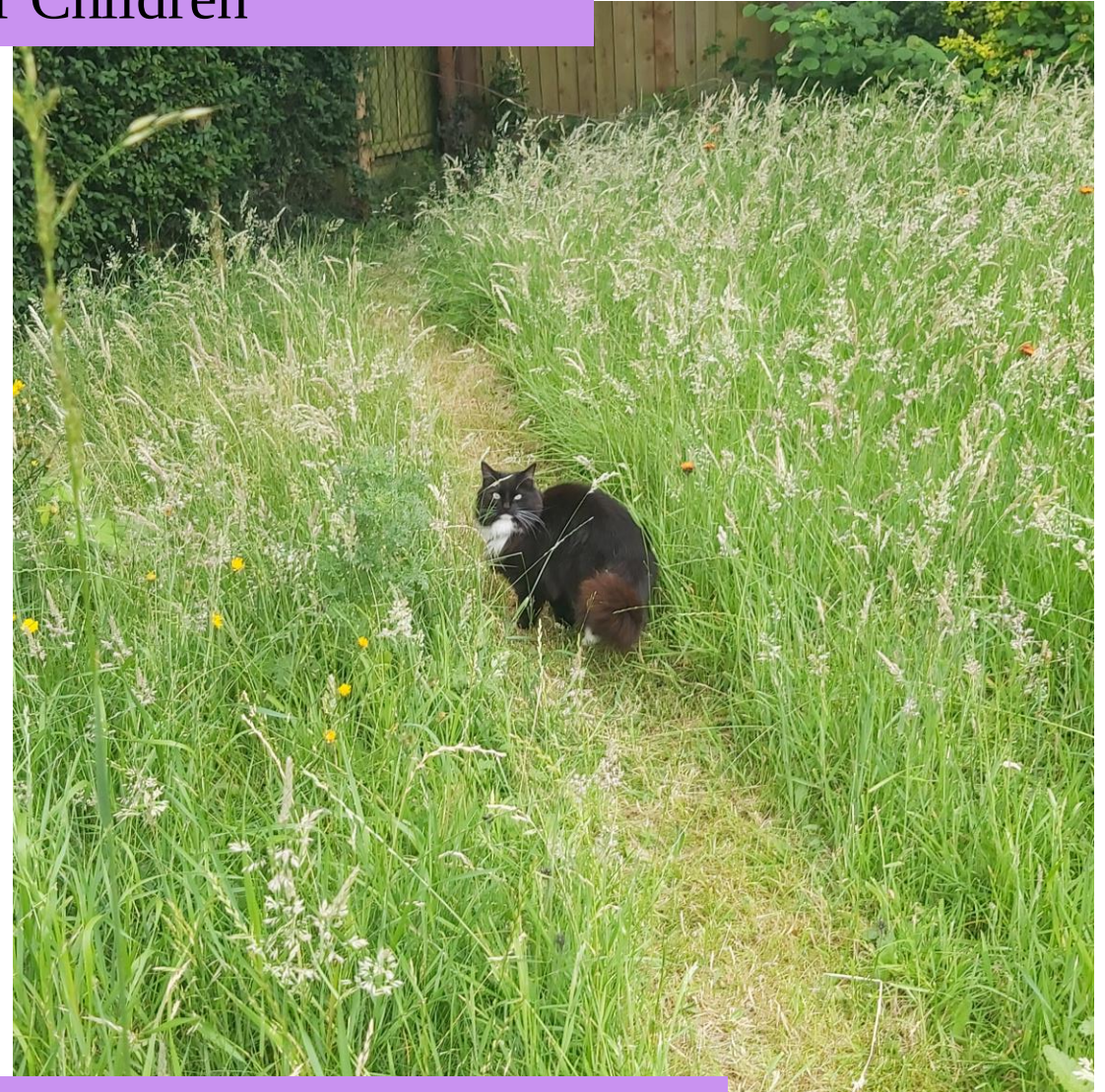
I signed up with Keep Wales Tidy scheme. This way we have the pink Cardiff council rubbish bags, which means that they will always be collected by the council. All litter picks were conducted covid safely.

- #keepwalestidy
- #lovewhereyoulive



Buffy's Adventure

A Story for Children



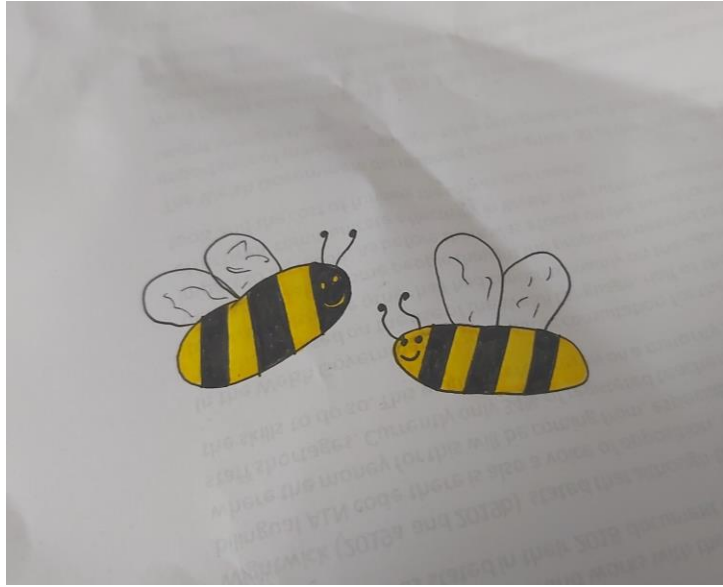
My name is Buffy, and this is my wildlife garden. It is like a jungle to me and I am a panther.

I can see plants and trees, insects and birds, and sometimes frogs!



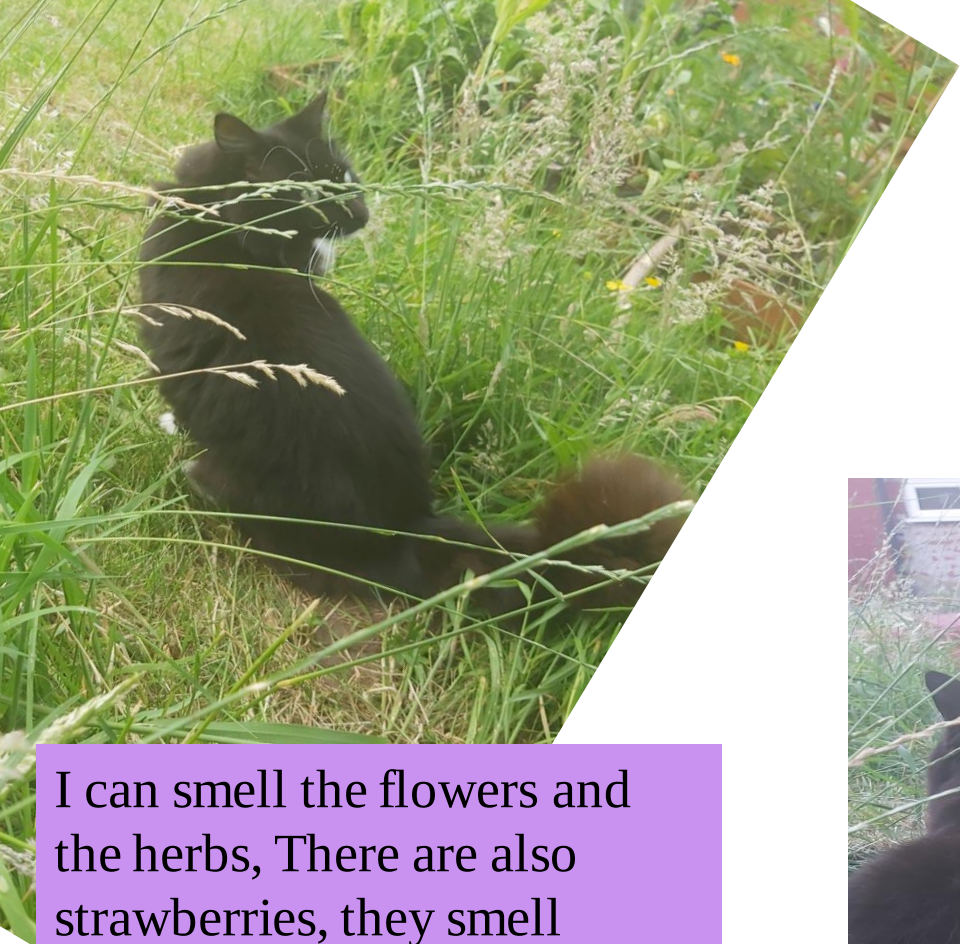
I watch the butterflies amongst the flowers and the ants busying about on the patio. Behind the flowerpots there are woodlice and earwigs.





In the evening I watch the scurrying mice and fluttering bats.

I can hear birds singing. They all have different songs. I can hear the blackbird, the sparrows and the wood pigeons. I can also hear bees buzzing and bumbling about in the flowers.



I can smell the flowers and the herbs, There are also strawberries, they smell lovely!
I can taste the strawberries. But I'm not sure they are meant for cats.

I can taste the grass, which I eat a bit of to help my digestion. I can feel the long grass along my sides as I stalk through it. It's taller than me, like a jungle!



I can watch my mummy pick fruit and vegetables that she has grown. There are large salad leaves, strawberries, potatoes and herbs.

'In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.'

- John Muir



After spending time at the meadows and learning about **#nomowmay**. We turned our garden into a meadow. All spring and summer we keep the lawn long. We keep a small patch short for us to sit and we mow paths so we can access all beds. Apart from that the rest is left for nature.

In the longest parts the grass reached my hip. We discovered so many different types of grass.

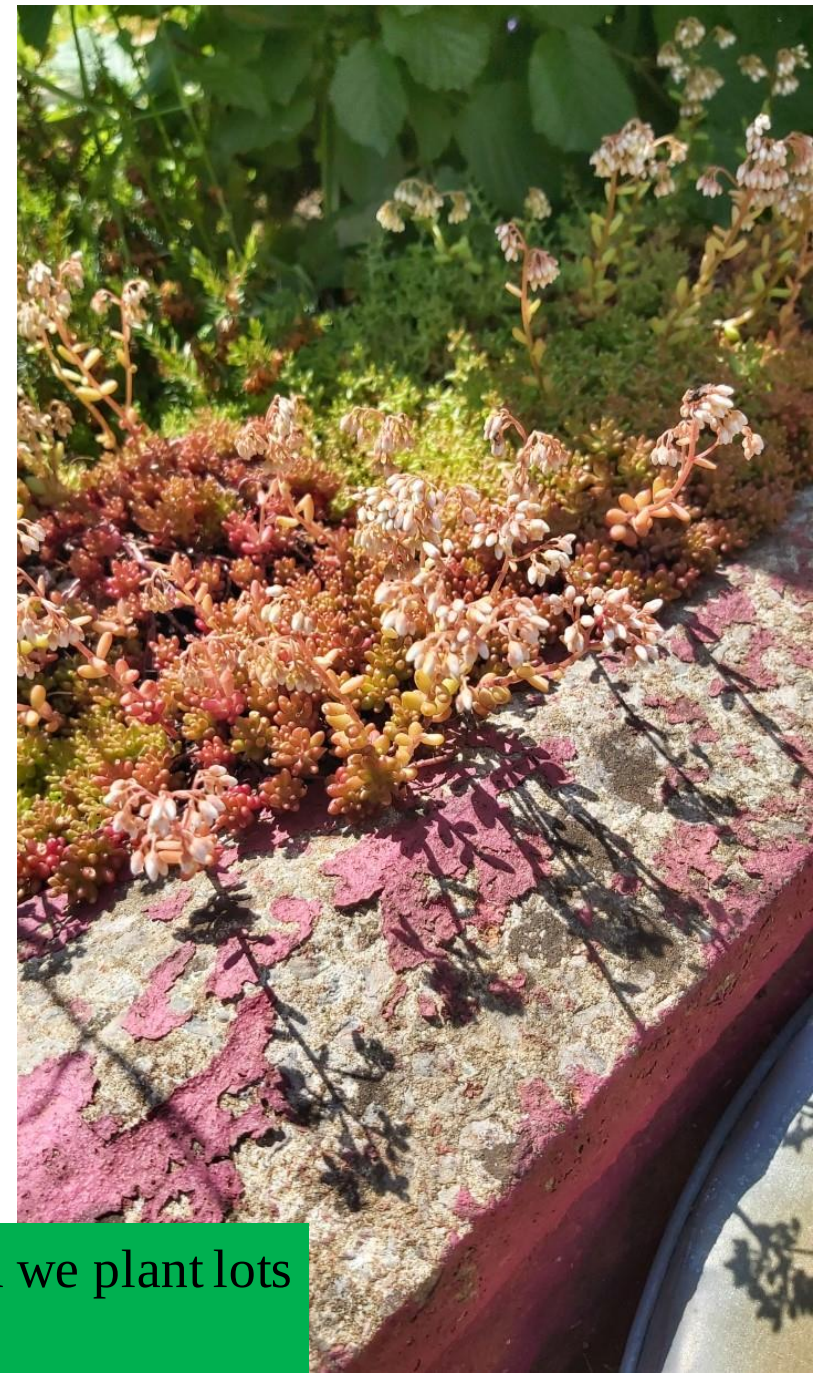
Our pet cats love running through the long grass. Like tigers in the jungle.



'If we surrendered to earth's intelligence we could rise up rooted, like trees.'

- Rainer Maria Rilke





To encourage many pollinators into the garden we plant lots of different flowers.

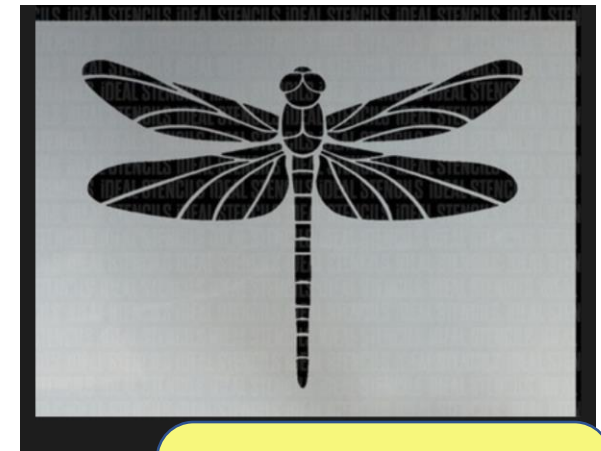
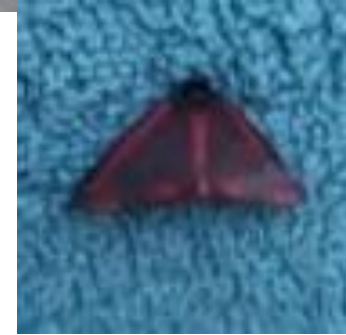


As well as having a mini meadow we decided to grow as many fruits and vegetables as we could. This was to reduce our carbon footprint and to continue our reconnection to nature. We grow everything from seed. This year we are growing lettuce, sweetcorn, sweet peppers, pak choi, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, apples, parsnips, courgette, carrots, leeks, turnips, aubergine, cucumber, onion, garlic, chives, rosemary and fennel.





In our garden we have noticed the incredible insects that live there. We also noticed that there were a lot less insects than when we were children. Even though we plant plants especially to encourage insects, the numbers aren't as good as they should be.

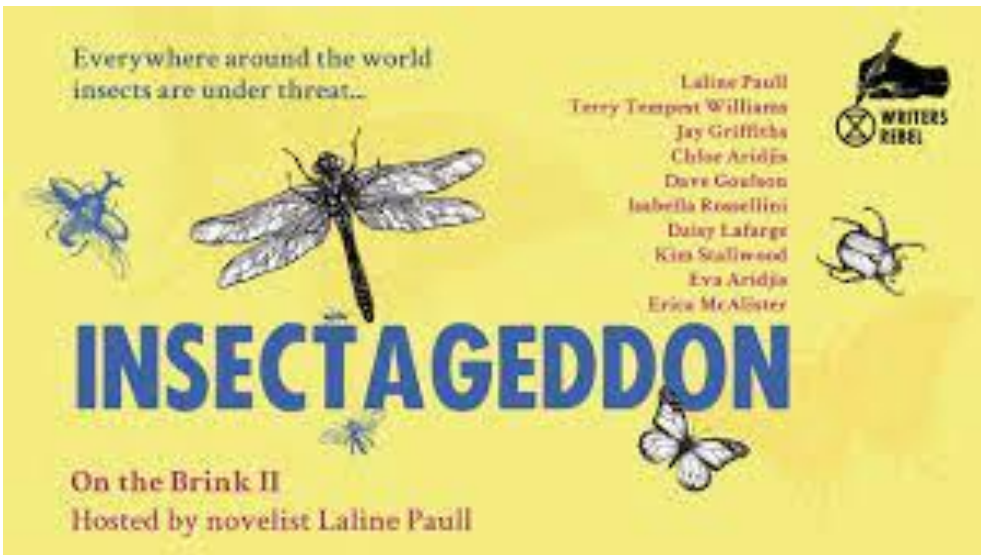


We made placards to highlight the problems insects face.

Insectageddon was an online event which showed us the stark reality of how many insect species are on the brink of extinction.



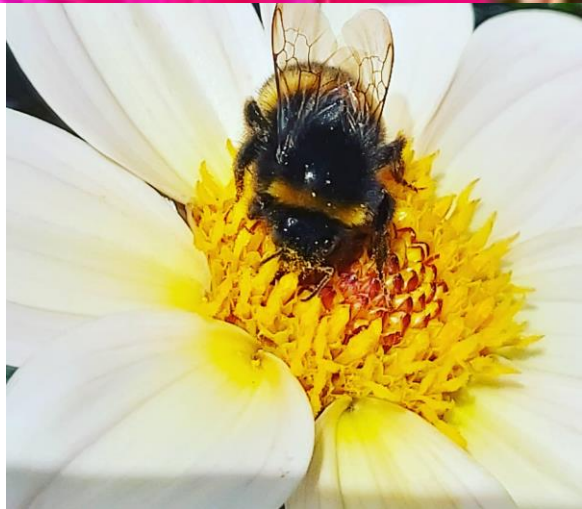
'Nature is not a hobby, it is the life on which we depend.' - Jay Griffin.





'Keeping of bees is like the
direction of sunbeams.'
- Henry David Thoreau

Last year we spent a lot of time watching bees.
We counted 12 different species.
This year we watched our bees hatch from our
three bee boxes. They've been whizzing round the
garden and gathering materials to make nests.
We have different types of solitary bees in our
boxes including leaf cutter bees and red mining
bees.
We planted a lot of flowers for the bees.
#savethebees



'The hum of bees is the voice
of the garden.'
- Elizabeth Lawrence

'The busy bee has no time for
sorrow.'
- William Blake





Another way I am trying to be sustainable and eco-friendly is with what I buy. I try to buy products that are plastic free.

When this is not possible I will try to reuse items. I have made non recyclable bottle lids into flower shaped bee and insect feeders.

I have also upcycled packaging into pin wheels, this is a fun and easy activity to brighten up the garden.





(Seal Rescue Ireland, 2019)



(Yting.com, no date)



(Ecobricks.org, no date)



(Pinterest, no date)



(Waste Aid, 2019)

When I have soft plastics that cannot be recycled then I turn them into Ecobricks. As it can be seen, ecobricks are bottles filled with washed and cut up pieces of plastic. These are stuffed into bottles, which become heavy bricks. These can then be sent off to create many amazing projects. In some countries they are used to make houses. When I have enough my wife and I plan on creating a garden table with out bricks.

How Ianto (aged four) Saved the World.



One day Ianto was out for a walk when we saw something shocking. An adult dropped some rubbish on the grass.



This made Ianto sad. After talking with his mummy he decided to do a mini litter pick.



Watching a bird eating seeds Ianto wondered what else he could do to help.

So Ianto watered the flowers and plants in the garden.



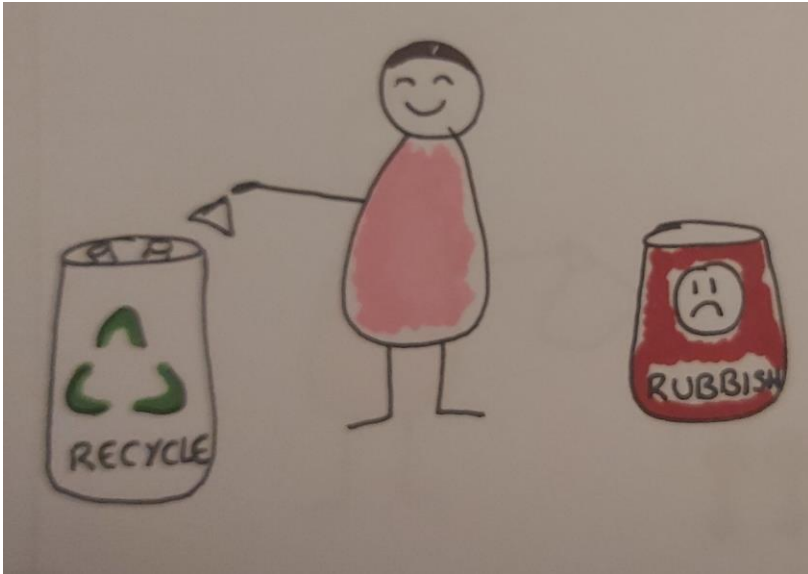
He watched the bees buzz around the garden.



He helped pick peppers and other fruits and vegetables.

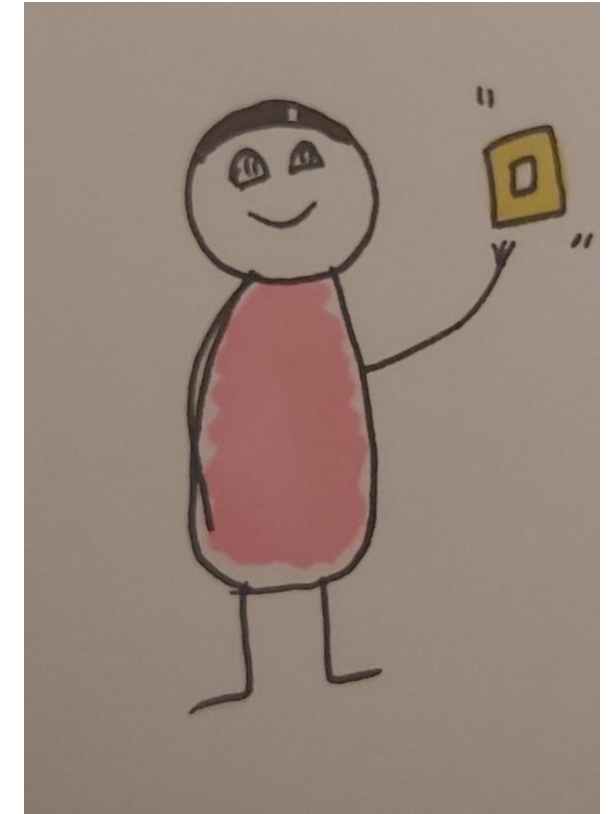


Ianto made sure to always recycle when he had finished with paper.



He put food waste into a compost bin as food for the worms.

Ianto made sure to turn off his light when he left his bedroom.





And that is how Ianto saved the world!

The End.