Cwmpas x Wildlife Trusts

Case Study

Cwmpas has been supporting Wildlife Trusts Wales on the start of their digital transformation journey.

Marc Davies, Cwmpas' Digital Programme Lead, worked closely with Alice Kershaw, Head of Digital Transformation at Wildlife Trusts Wales, and Elizabeth Stokes, Program Manager at Gwent Wildlife Trust, to create a strategy that would be both forward-thinking but also manageable in its delivery.

The research has been shared with all 60 Senedd Members, the Cabinet Secretary and Welsh Government officials.

Marc Davies
Digital Programme Lead

Marc is the Digital Programme Lead at Cwmpas. Based in West Wales he is a first-language Welsh speaker and has worked at CWMPAS since 2006. He has an extensive network of contacts across Ceredigion and represents the Third Sector on strategic working groups such as the Growing Mid Wales Digital Programme board and the Hywel Dda Regional Digital Transformation Board.

What is Digital Transformation?

The phrase 'digital transformation' can be an overwhelming phrase for organisations; however, moving with the digital times is essential for the growth and sustainability of any business.

In fact, according to a McKinsey Global Survey, COVID-19 has speeded the adoption of digital technologies by several years – and many of those changes are here for the long haul. At Cwmpas, we try not to focus too much on the technical aspect and instead like to describe 'digital transformation' as 'service transformation' enabled by digital. By looking at interventions through the lens of business improvement, we are better able to identify areas, activities or services that need to be looked at and where improvement or change could be explored.

This allows digital development to complement all existing business strategies..

Our work with Wildlife Trusts Wales

With a digital strategy in its infancy, Cwmpas' work with Wildlife Trusts Wales was heavily focused on establishing the organisation's cultural readiness for adopting digital change.

Using an organisation like Cwmpas was important for Wildlife Trusts Wales in order to have locally focused knowledge specific to Wales, as there are different contexts in terms of digital transformation, even in comparison to the experiences of other Wildlife Trusts.

It was also essential to find a partner who could work alongside the five local Welsh Wildlife Trusts and look at the strategies needed to demystify the digital transformation concept. Alice explains:

"Working with Cwmpas allowed us to bring in the expertise and local knowledge we needed to start our digital transformation journey."

There were two key elements to Cwmpas' work with Wildlife Trusts Wales:

1) Change Readiness Assessment
Involved interviewing 55 Wildlife Trust staff in Wales to identify how they have historically managed and personally handled organisational change and the current thoughts around digital change.

Responses were matched against the change curve, and these results helped establish the cultural readiness of Wildlife Trusts in Wales to proceed with future change.

The more frequently mentioned responses were suggested as the next steps for the organisation to explore/improve.

2) Digital Maturity Assessment
·Involved each of the Trusts' CEOs in completing an online assessment that allowed insights across eight disciplines into areas where each Trust could improve its digital maturity.

By combining the findings of both these assessments, Cwmpas identified four distinct areas that each Wildlife Trust could move forward with regarding development. These were laid out in a Theory of Change, which defined long-term goals and then mapped backwards to identify necessary preconditions. These key areas included:
- People
- Data and Technology
- Communications
- Projects and Services

Impact.

Before Cwmpas conducted their assessments, Wildlife Trusts Wales had struggled with a synergy between creating and delivering a digital strategy. However, with a new plan in place thanks to Cwmpas' work, Wildlife Trusts in Wales aims to get a more collaborative working approach across all the individual trusts in Wales and establish a closer link with the UK Trusts' National Digital Strategy. Marc elaborates:

"With this information, we were able to help Wildlife Trusts in Wales determine their next steps. Without processes such as these and personal interaction with members of the organisation, it can be difficult to fully understand the best course of action. Getting this step right is very important to our process here at Cwmpas."

Impact cont.

The results presented by Marc were received positively by Wildlife Trusts Wales. Alice explains: "As a result of Mark being able to have so many open-ended conversations with people, it really helped a wider discussion about what digital might mean for the Wildlife Trusts in Wales."

Key impacts of this initial exploration phase:

- ·Raising awareness amongst staff of what digital transformation is.

- ·Boosting confidence amongst staff about their capacity and ability to adapt to digital change.

- ·Getting a sense of what it might mean to be a more digital organisation.

Some key actions, such as the maturity checker, will become an annual practice at Wildlife Trusts Wales. This will establish an ongoing measure that can monitor digital progression across each Trust.

Advice for other businesses looking to adopt digital transformation

Any kind of change can be daunting for organisations; however, even taking small steps and digesting learning in a bitesize way can make the process more feasible and impactful in the long run.

Alice explains: "You don't need to change everything at once. You need to work on what it is first and then slowly build up to more elements. This organic way of transforming will also help your team buy into the transformation journey."

This is where Cwmpas is able to help. As an independent voice, Cwmpas are able to work collaboratively with your organisation to identify the best route towards digital transformation in any third-sector organisation, public-sector organisation or department. Alice said in conclusion:

"Working with Marc and the whole Cwmpas team has been fantastic. Marc brought that crucial external perspective to the team but didn't turn up and say, "You must do this!" It felt like we were working on this transformation journey together, and that was really important culturally for us."

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Alice stresses its importance of a robust digital transformation strategy:

"Adopting a digital transformation strategy sets the groundwork for the future of an organisation so that it can continue to build on its digital journey, it's a lot like getting the foundation right before you start putting all the building blocks in place."

Newid: Digital for the Third Sector

Cwmpas also brought in a digital project called Newid Cymru to support the Wildlife Trusts. The Newid project promotes good digital practice across the third sector in Wales, and the Trusts were also able to benefit from this guidance on their digital strategy.

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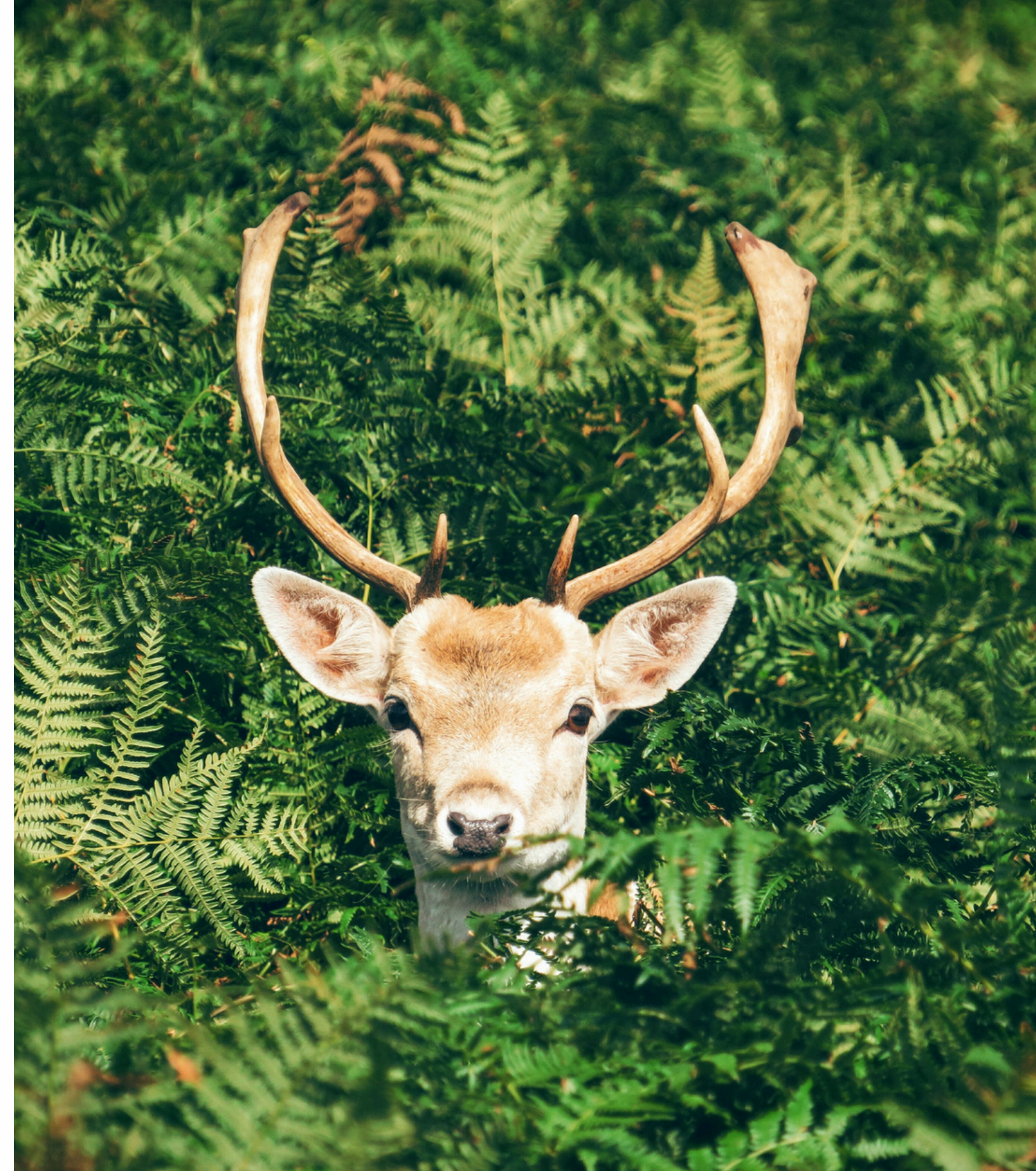
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