

# ERA bring sustainable benefit to Wycliffe College

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| CLIENT:          | Wycliffe College   |
| SECTOR:          | Education  |
| COST CATEGORIES: | Resource and expertise helps to bring informed control to the financial administration of Wycliffe College |

## THE CLIENT

Wycliffe College is one of the most prestigious independent schools in the country. Founded in 1882, it now educates nearly 700 boarding and day pupils, from ages 2-18, in the inspiring 52-acre setting around the original 17th Century building chosen by the founder, G W Sibly.

Like all independent schools, Wycliffe College cannot rest on its laurels. The change of the Estates Bursar at the same time as the Director of Finance and Operations provided an opportunity to review all overhead costs. Wycliffe College had, in recent years, built a new Sports Hall, installed a new astro pitch and completed a new double boarding house. However, these significant capital improvements had taken resources and focus away from the day to day financial running of the school. The new Director of Finance and Resources, Tom Wood, previously with another ERA client, recognised that the expertise and resource that ERA provide would help him bring quick and sustainable results.

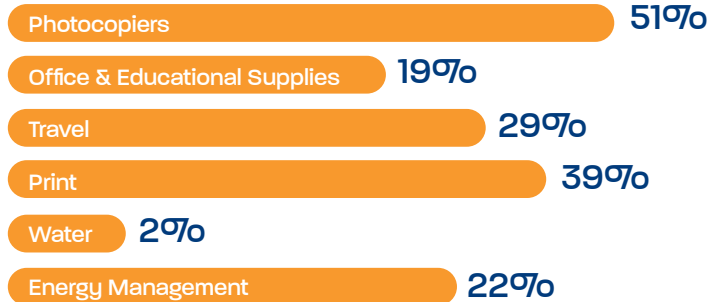
## PHOTOCOPIERS

The first category ERA looked at was Wycliffe's fleet of photocopiers. These were all supplied and serviced by one company, but had a variety of lease end dates. The first task for Brian Pinner, one of ERA's Photocopier specialists, was to identify the machines needing immediate replacement, issuing termination notices as appropriate and commencing an open market tender. In-depth analysis of the usage by each machine enabled a focused tender and, using ERA's knowledge of the photocopier market, in particular Educational Framework Agreements that Wycliffe College would qualify for, Brian was able to find a manufacturer who would supply machines using the incumbent supplier for servicing. This ensured a continuity of the good service and working relationship with the benefits of a significant 51% financial saving.

ERA do not just find a solution but assist clients over the full term of engagement and this benefitted Wycliffe College when the service provider was taken over by a third party and ERA were able to reduce the impact on the school of the inevitable changes. Brian's continued involvement meant that they were able to manage this change and ensure that the new supplier recognised the commitments made by the previous incumbent.

At the same time as ERA were reviewing the Photocopiers, Tom asked that other categories were also reviewed.

## RESULTS



Despite their name, the benefits that ERA bring to the business are far more than 'expense reduction'. It is much more about improving value and service from suppliers, and ensuring transparency and accountability. Their involvement has helped Wycliffe to rationalise and consolidate our supply chain, thereby strengthening relationships with our core trading partners. It has also allowed us to focus on supporting local businesses and reduce the impact our activities have on the environment. Jonathan's professionalism, pro-activity and focus on the detail continues to be invaluable to Wycliffe."

**TOM WOOD**  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

ERA's extensive resources enables them to draw on expertise across a number of categories and to run additional reviews concurrently - something most clients just do not have the resource to do themselves. ERA also reviewed the supply of Office and Educational Consumables, Water, Electricity and Gas, Energy Management, Print and Travel.

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## OFFICE AND EDUCATIONAL CONSUMABLES

The review of Office and Educational Consumables was undertaken by the specialist Anthony Kinder. Detailed analysis of the existing spend and a wide market tender produced a variety of options for Wycliffe College to consider. While the greatest financial benefit would have been by introducing a new supplier, the benefits of an easy transition and an on-going relationship meant Tom favoured consolidation with an existing supplier. This has proved beneficial with a hassle-free implementation and savings above forecast of 19%.

## WATER

The review of Water was relatively simple at first. A site visit was made by Phil Howarth, ERA's Water specialist, and meter readings were taken across the estate. Analysis of these readings, together with obtaining historic readings direct from the supplier, showed that, while some improvement might be gained for the swimming pool, Wycliffe College were being charged correctly and were not consuming more water than would be expected. However, during this analysis, the supplier demonstrated its considerable lack of customer service by submitting a 57-page re-billing with no notice or explanation of why it resulted in a £11,000 charge. Phil took on this challenge and, through extensive communication with the supplier, the Consumer Council for Water and analysis of the re-bill and previous bills over a 12mth period, was able to establish the true reason for the additional charge. While ultimately the charge was justified, the lack of clarity in the supplier's billing process meant it was only through Phil's expertise, knowledge of the industry and determination that Wycliffe College had the proof to justify the payment. This debacle hastened Tom's decision to move supplier. This transfer generated a small 2% financial saving but it was the administrative benefits that were important.

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Wycliffe College is spread over 52-acres and incorporates every period of building from the 17th to the 21st Century and with that comes a similar variety of boilers, windows, insulation and lighting and means that some parts of the estate are more energy efficient than others. ERA's Energy Management specialist Ian Morrison conducted a survey of the estate, producing a report that highlights where the School can reduce energy use, so both saving cost and helping the environment, and improving the estate. The potential savings of over £130,000 were detailed against the capital investment required so that Wycliffe College could prioritise those that would bring most benefit or were most affordable. This work led on to Ian being asked to complete the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) submission and in particular to conduct a detailed survey into the high electricity usage in one specific building, a project that is still ongoing.

## PRINT AND TRAVEL

ERA have recently undertaken two more projects - Print and Travel. Anthony Kinder's review of Print and Barry Donovan's review of Travel both used the detailed analytical ERA process that had brought benefit to Wycliffe in the other projects, and again this methodology provided substantial and sustainable benefits. Although the incumbents in both projects were providing good service, changes in the market place and within Wycliffe as a client, especially concerning corporate responsibility in Travel, meant that a larger and more flexible supplier would bring both financial and non-financial benefit to the College. The combination of these benefits, highlighted in the supplier presentations that ERA arranged, persuaded Wycliffe to change suppliers. This decision, while still in its early stages, has already reaped significant financial benefit (30% for Print and 22% for Travel).

## GAS AND ELECTRICITY

Most of the Gas and Electricity supply was on one contract, ending some months ahead. However, one supply was due for renewal sometime earlier. Richard Clayton, one of ERA's Energy specialists, started exploring the market for the best solution, looking at not only the first renewal but bearing in mind the rest of the supply due for renewal later in the year. The challenge at Wycliffe College was that, with 40 Electricity meters and 31 Gas meters, scattered across the whole 52-acre site, ease of management was critical. Richard was able to not only source a competitive supply but also provide ongoing analysis and invoice detail to enable Tom to verify the bills. The best tariff was a given - it was the ongoing support that provided real benefit for Wycliffe College. This included negotiating the significant transfer to the new supplier as well as managing monthly reads for all the meters and dealing with a rebate for a decommissioned meter.

