Godalming College saves over £12,000 on water charges

INTRODUCTION:

Godalming College is a specialist sixth form education based in Surrey. When the college joined TEC's Managed Water and Wastewater Framework, they took the opportunity to address a problematic leak which two previous contractors had failed to rectify.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In September 2021, Wave was awarded from the TEC framework as the College's water supplier to investigate the leak. The College was using almost 30m3 of water per day when it expected to only use around a third of that. Several factors made the investigation more challenging. Unusually, the site had no main internal stop tap valve, making it difficult to narrow down the leak location. Other internal valves were also faulty, and work could only take place at the weekend to avoid disruption.

Once Godalming College had replaced the faulty valves, Wave could perform a thorough investigation, which was booked in October. The first step was a leak detection survey to locate the leak. This involved techniques such as acoustic surveys which use sound to find the leak. This survey significantly narrowed down the potential location by ruling out leaks in the main college building, and between the meter and point of entry into the building. This left one possible location - another water supply running from the outdoor tap to an additional building that houses the canteen, boiler room and kitchen. Wave capped off this supply and found the water meter stopped, confirming the leak was on the network. To avoid disruption to the college, Wave suggested moling, which is a trenchless method of laying pipes. During this process, a pneumatically driven machine forces its way through soil along the desired path of the pipe. Not only does this save the time and cost involved in a full excavation, it also makes reinstatement much simpler.

Godalming College agreed with the approach, so the works were carried out during a weekend in November. Wave replaced 40 metres of pipework and connected the new supply to the existing network. However, while this significantly reduced the leakage, the water meter showed there was another minor issue on the network. After further investigation, Wave found that urinal cisterns were continually filling, leading to a waste of 0.4 litres per minute, each uncontrolled urinal can result to a loss of £700 per year!

THE RESULT

- With all leaks fixed, Godalming College was back to their expected water consumption, saving more than £8,000 per year and over 3,600m3.
- Proving to Thames Water that some of the water the College consumed had gone into the ground and not into the sewers for processing, Wave were able to claim back £4,850 on behalf of the College.

"Having been notified by Thames Water that we may have a leak due to some concerning water meter readings, we sourced two contractors to survey the site and look for the source of the leak. Unfortunately two weekends of continuous surveys, they were unsuccessful in locating the source of the leak. We saw joining the TEC Water Framework as an opportunity to try again, and I'm glad we did. As a college, we needed an organisation that could fit around our schedule and minimise disruption. Wave managed to do just that while fixing an expensive leak, as well as finding another one. The work was completed as agreed, below my budgeted expectation!"

John Erasmus
Estates Manager
Godalming College