

CALABASH

Calabash is one of London's leading commercial cleaning companies. Since it was established in 1992, the business has built a comprehensive portfolio of facilities management services and has become renowned for exceptional quality standards. The company has always been committed to continuous improvement and challenging the status quo to add greater value for its clients and have a positive impact on the world around it.

Calabash identified the need to differentiate itself from competitors and build resilience through sustainable practice. The leadership team recognised that clients were under pressure from regulators and stakeholders to demonstrate their sustainability credentials and the business was in an ideal position



www.calabashgroup.co.uk

to help clients make more responsible choices through its service offer.

The business had already laid the foundations. It had built a reputation as an employer of choice, valuing staff in a sector that is notorious for poor pay and zero hours contracts. It had also set about reducing its environmental footprint by using high impact, high performance cleaning products. Yet the leadership team lacked the in-house experience and expertise to take that to the next level and embed sustainable practices throughout the organisation.

AT A GLANCE...

- Used Wylde's five step process to develop a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy
- Agreed a detailed Action Plan and Road Map to set clear objectives
- Supported measuring baseline GHG emissions across Scopes 1, 2 and 3
- Trained an in-house sustainability lead to drive interventions
- Established leadership values and cultural alignment
- Stakeholder engagement support through a comprehensive communications strategy
- Provided specialist support in highlighting sustainability credentials in proposals and tenders
- Development of a new website and social media profiles

The Wylde journey

Calabash started looking for expert support and selected Wylde Connections as its trusted sustainability partner. It enrolled on our Complete Suite sustainability consultancy programme which helps businesses achieve their goals through a Five Step Model of ASSESS, DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT, ENGAGE and TRANSFORM.

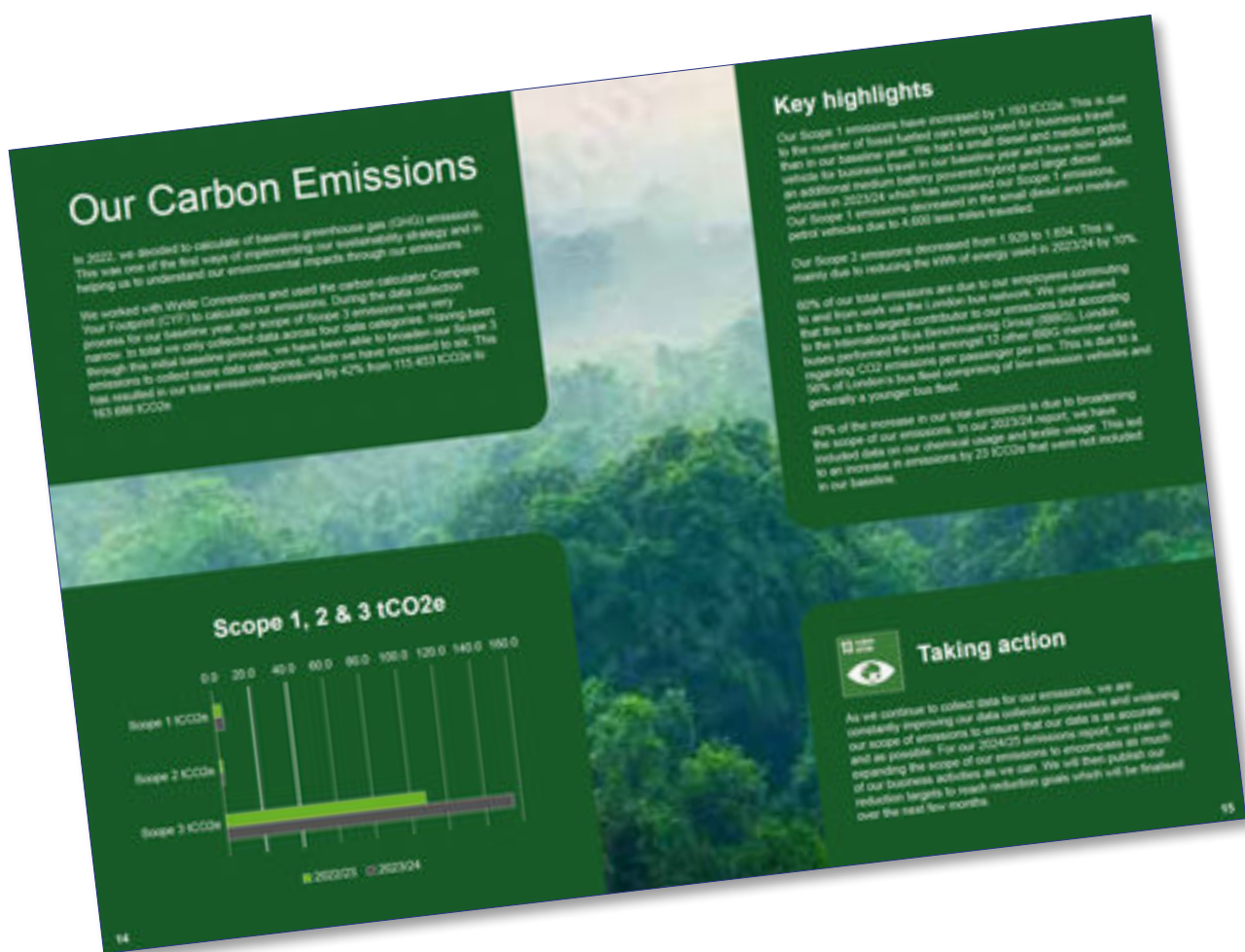
Wylde's consultants went into the company to raise awareness about sustainability issues and take a deep dive into its operations and wider value chain. Over the ensuing weeks, we developed a close relationship with the team by delivering a carefully curated programme of facilitated workshop-style sessions.

Using tools such as SWOT, PESTLE, leadership values profiling, value chain mapping, stakeholder mapping and a materiality assessment, we helped Calabash understand its impacts on people and planet, both positive and negative. That insight also highlighted how embracing sustainable practice would help mitigate risks and maximise opportunities in a challenging commercial market.

Calabash built its knowledge base, gained understanding about its impacts and agreed a set of priorities. Armed with a detailed strategy, road map and external sustainability plan to share with stakeholders, the business was equipped for the next stage of its sustainability journey.



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Driving decarbonisation

With a detailed plan in place, Calabash set about gathering the data and metrics it needed to fully implement its strategy. The first step was starting the process of measuring and reducing carbon footprint.

The Wylde team stepped up support to help establish the company's baseline GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions. This provided a reference point against which Calabash can measure future progress towards

decarbonisation. The process involved calculations across Scopes 1, 2 and 3 and reflected the company's ambition and level of commitment to reduce its negative impacts.

With the help of Wylde, Calabash has since completed its second year of emissions calculations. The business is now in a position to develop a detailed carbon reduction plan and has already set targets to halve emissions by 2030 and hit Net Zero by 2050.



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Embracing best practice

Calabash now has the processes in place to measure impacts and KPIs to track progress. In January 2025, the business launched its first fully fledged Sustainability Report which marks a major milestone for the company. Wylde is helping showcase these achievements through a robust communications strategy which engages with all key stakeholders. This encompasses a range of channels, including blogs, social posts, client case studies and newsletters.

Following a recent management review, the company has entered a new era and taken the opportunity to put sustainability at the heart of its business plans. It is focusing efforts on implementing its strategy and focused on a range of interventions that both help manage its own impacts and help its clients make more sustainable choices.

Highlights include investing in more energy efficient vacuum cleaners and using cleaning systems that reduce water consumption. In terms of reducing waste, Calabash offers clients a range of recycling streams through its partnership with waste management companies and has moved its HR and recruitment processes online to reduce paper use.

Wylde is also supporting Calabash to develop its People First strategy and have a positive social impact. The business is proud of its diverse workforce which incorporates more than 20 different nationalities. It values its staff as its greatest asset and in April 2021 committed to paying The Real Living Wage to help ensure employees can meet the real cost of living. The business has worked tirelessly to make clients understand the benefits of fair pay and more than 90% have now signed up.



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Next steps

Calabash remains as ambitious as ever and its partnership with Wylde continues to evolve as the business works to move beyond compliance and demonstrate best practice to influence others within the facilities management sector.

Priorities for the coming months include improving data collection processes and securing B Corp certification to help demonstrate its commitment to people and planet. Wylde will also support the business in delivering training programmes designed to raise awareness about sustainability issues.

We have also enrolled Office Assistant Sarah Salmon on our IEMA Certificate in Environmental Management Practitioner Membership (PIEMA). The internationally recognised qualification is designed to deepen knowledge and practical expertise for those leading sustainability agendas. It provides a comprehensive overview of sustainability principles, legislation, and business integration and will help Sarah ensure the business meets its objectives.

Calabash Chief Operating Officer Thomas Salmon said:

"Working with consultancy Wylde Connections, Calabash has developed a robust sustainability strategy and action plan which will guide us on our journey as a responsible business. It allows us to ensure that ESG principles are embedded throughout our organisation, from the way we treat our staff to the way we build our portfolio of services."

The business is already seeing the impact of its efforts. By demonstrating its sustainability credentials, Calabash has been in a far stronger position to secure new contracts and respond to the pain points of its existing customer base. At the same time, its social focus has seen in gain a reputation as a responsible employer, helping attract and retain the best talent.

Wylde's Managing Director Denise Taylor said:

"Calabash Group's commitment to prioritise people and planet has not only set the business on course to meet its ESG objectives but is also delivering business benefits. As sustainability moves further up the corporate agenda Calabash is winning new business on the back of its vision, mission and values. I am excited to see what the coming months have in store and continuing to support the team in navigating the road ahead."



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