



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Give Campaign Vision Document *Standedge*

[V3] [31/07/2025]



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1. Introduction

This 'Vision Document' has been prepared in support of an application for express consent submitted pursuant to Regulation 9 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Express consent is sought to display various non-illuminated forms of signage around the wider Standedge site. The proposals would be displayed as part of the 'Give' Campaign, which seeks to raise awareness of the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) as a charity to support fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts.

The purpose of the document is to set out the Trust's vision for Standedge and the surrounding canal network within the Yorkshire and North East Region. It explains why we need to raise funds through public donations and have an ambition to increase volunteer numbers, and why the 'Give' Campaign proposals are so important.

A signage campaign is considered to be a particularly impactful approach. Trust research has found that 17% of people who are aware of the Trust stated signs were one of the main methods of recalling the charity's brand (Waterways Engagement Monitor).

The document will also set out the detail of the proposed signage for which express consent is being sought.





2. Who We Are

It's not just water. Our canals are alive.

They're alive with hundreds of species. With 200 years of history. With memory, wonder and hope.

They're a network of waterways 2,000 miles long, where people have come to work, live, play, escape and connect with nature for generations. They hold a special place in so many hearts.

But our canals can't take care of themselves. And if they're to have a future, they need support.

We are Canal & River Trust, the charity responsible for their care. Our passionate and skilled volunteers and staff are dedicated to fixing, protecting and preserving our waterways throughout England and Wales.

They have always needed constant maintenance, conservation and repair to keep them open and alive, for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive in. But the increasing number of storms and droughts, as well as natural erosion through the passage of time, all put the canal network at serious risk.

We have some of the UK's finest examples of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian engineering and architecture in our care, not to mention places with much older histories. The upkeep and repair of these important features need a careful hand, sensitive not only to the preservation of our heritage but also to the changing demands of modern life.

When maintenance becomes necessary, the parts needed are not mass-produced – we handcraft all our lock gates in specialist workshops. We take pride in this, but it also means repairs can be expensive, requiring specialist knowledge and bespoke training for our colleagues.

Millions of us visit the canals every week, but rarely do we stop and think about what it takes to look after them – or what we'd lose if they were gone.

But the reality is, we can't keep them open and alive without support.



3. Give Campaign

The GIVE Project aims to raise awareness across the canal network for the charity that cares for and protects this vital piece of living heritage.

National insight surveys conducted between 2021-2023 have shown that less than 20% of the public understands that the Trust is a charity that requires public support and donations. At a time when construction costs have risen significantly, combined with DEFRA's decision in 2024 to significantly reduce our funding from 2027, we are facing an estimated £300m deficit in our budget over the next 10 years. If we do nothing, this will have a very serious impact on our ability to maintain the network and keep our canals fully open.

This project is fundamental to helping us raise charitable awareness so that we can begin significantly increasing public and corporate donations and grow our teams of local volunteers.

The project's focus has been identifying key locations on the network that attract very high footfall, have strong local/regional links and a visitor demographic with a higher capacity to be able to donate.

Twelve sites were selected from a longlist of 30, prioritising locations where we can update existing proposals (rather than only adding new ones), and sites that can accommodate signage interventions without giving rise to 'visual clutter'.

All the funds raised by the Trust at each individual site will be allocated back to it, and therefore, new 'Give' signage will directly help to protect this special place for the local community, economy and future generations.



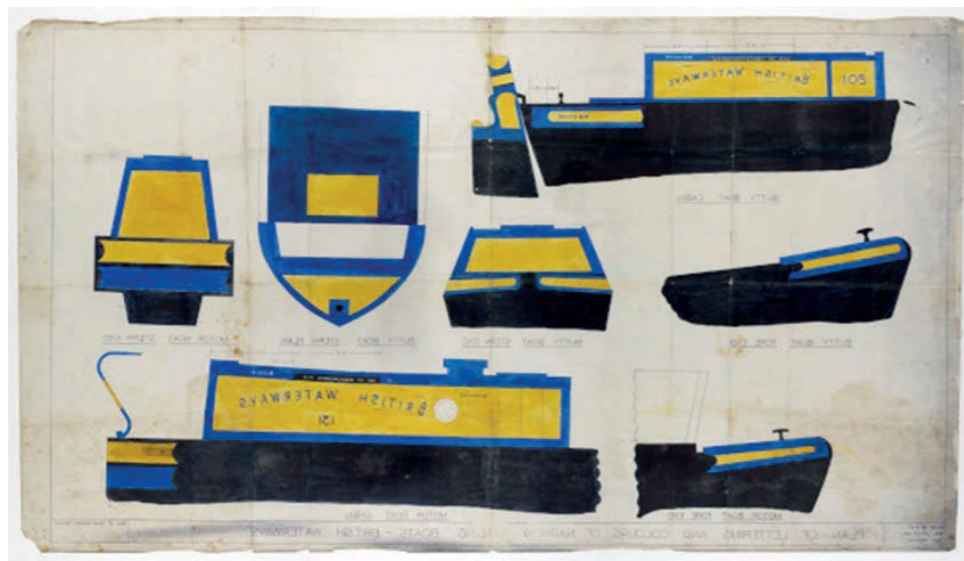
Canal & River Trust

Cared for by local volunteers.

From lock keeping and essential site maintenance to welcoming visitors from across the world, our team of local volunteers help make **Foxton Locks** special.

Find out how you can make a difference, search '**Canal & River Trust volunteer**'

Charity registration no. 1146792



DIWE butty & motor boat in blue and yellow livery, 1949 (Waterways Archive)



Malvern, SUC, 1950s (Waterways Archive, Herbert Dunkley Collection)



Summit Lock, Etruria, 1959 (Waterways Archive, Herbert Dunkley Collection)

4. Heritage Inspired

The following section was written by Dr Nigel Crowe BA (Hons), MSc (Dist), PhD, IHBC, an expert with over 40 years of experience in conservation and architectural history.

The proposals will be a mix of replacement and new, but will re-introduce and draw inspiration from the historic blue and yellow colours that formed the livery of workboats and some signage across the nationalised canals from 1948 onwards.

In the drab post-war years, blue and yellow stood out and became an easily identified livery for the fleets of Britain's working narrowboats and other craft. A number of restored and repainted boats still wear the colours in the 21st century.

The Trust has researched the historical context for the blue and yellow livery and there is archive and museum-based evidence for its former widespread use across the historic canals that the Trust now cares for.

On 1 January 1948 many canals across the UK were nationalised to come under the British Transport Commission's Docks and Inland Waterways Executive (DIWE). The DIWE introduced standardised blue and yellow (sometimes referred to as 'blue and gold') livery for its fleet of workboats.

The blue and yellow colours replaced those of former canal company fleets which DIWE acquired, e.g., the Fellows, Morton & Clayton's red, green, white and yellow and the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company's wartime austerity livery of red, white and blue.

The Trust cares for many hundreds of heritage assets and sites throughout each region. By updating the signage at these sites, the Trust can draw attention to the transformational work it does to keep historic canals open and alive. The use of blue and yellow for the signage is historically appropriate and there is strong justification and precedence for the use of these traditional, authentic canal colours in the 21st century.



5. About Standedge

Standedge Tunnel is an awe-inspiring structure and considered one of the seven wonders of the waterways. It is an extraordinary feat of engineering that took over 17 years to dig by hand, spanning a length of 4,984 meters. Visitors can experience the tunnel first-hand, choosing between a unique paddling adventure or a more leisurely boat trip. Each journey takes approximately two hours one way, either from Marsden to Diggle or from Diggle to Marsden.

The tunnel's setting is truly peaceful, with rolling green hills of the Pennines that surround Marsden within the backdrop. The area's popularity draws many visitors who enjoy the towpath, which connects to local hikes and nature trails. Next to the tunnel, a café run by volunteers from the Canal & River Trust welcomes visitors with a friendly face and provides them with a wealth of information about the area.

From Marsden train station, a stroll down the towpath reveals a charming, wooded canal scene featuring the infrastructure of the canals and crossing railway lines. After this brief walk, the canal opens up to the Standedge Visitor Centre, which was once a transshipment warehouse but has now been transformed into the North of England Centre for Music and Arts. Following a visit to Standedge Tunnel, the Tunnel End Nature Trail provides a scenic walking loop that connects to even more trails further afield.

The Canal & River Trust regularly hosts bookable activities, including boat trips, canoe trips through the tunnel, heritage tours, and paddle craft taster sessions. In addition to these activities, the Trust has helped host Pride-themed events at Standedge Tunnel, with the inaugural "Pride at Standedge" celebration taking place in June 2022. The area has also been home to various musical and arts events.



6. Yorkshire & North East Vision

The following section was written by the Yorkshire and North East Regional team, who manage Standedge

The site at Standedge offers a unique opportunity for the public to engage with the canal, with the tunnel serving as its main attraction. Traveling through the longest, deepest, and highest canal tunnel in the country is a special experience.

Donations we receive will help ensure that: (a) the tunnel remains open by maintaining its infrastructure, including the tunnel itself, its approaches, and the water supply, and (b) we can provide access to the tunnel, whether through a trip boat, canoes, or private narrowboats.

Donations will be used for equipment and training necessary to maintain these areas. The café on-site is popular with visitors, but it is located in a building that requires constant maintenance to remain operational, and this incurs costs. It's worth mentioning that the site is primarily run by volunteers who are highly passionate about the site, this saves the Trust an extraordinary amount of expense whilst still offering high-quality quality personable experiences for visitors.

We have spent the past several years transforming our operational model at Standedge. This effort has led us to shift from incurring significant losses each year to now breaking even. Looking ahead, we aim for the site to generate additional income through initiatives like the trip boat, canoe rentals, and the café. This revenue will help support the maintenance of the waterways.

Our vision is to keep the waterways vibrant and accessible, with volunteer efforts doubling maintenance hours. Donations will fund the necessary materials, equipment, and training to support our staff and volunteers in this mission.

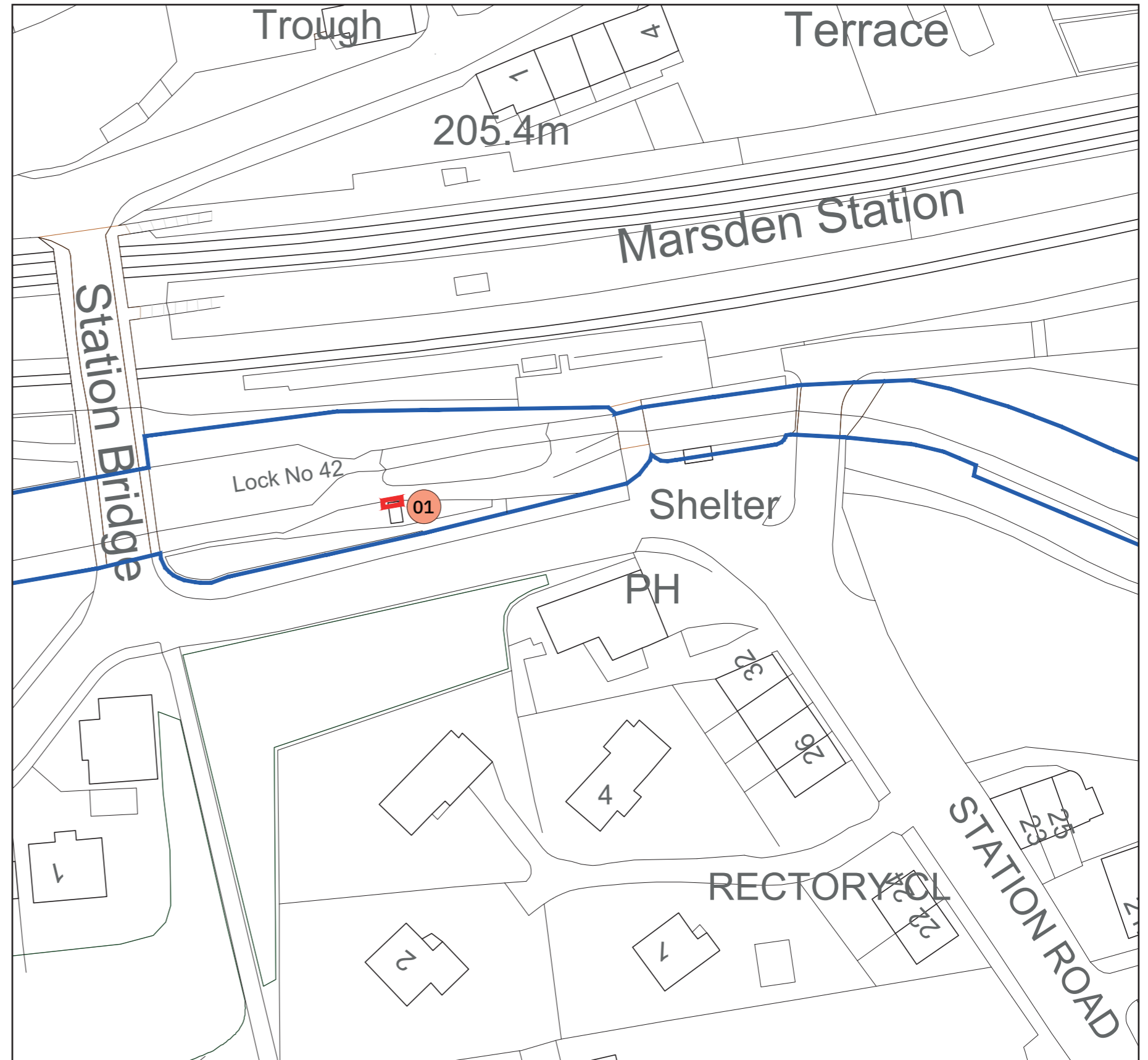


7. Application Proposals Plan




Express consent is sought for the display of a non-illuminated advertisements located at one of canals main areas of passing footfall.

The proposal comprises of the following:

01. New Sign on Yorkshire Water Building



Plan Key

-  Trust property boundary
-  Application boundary
-  Numbered proposals as listed above

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8. Details of Proposals

The following section sets out details of the single proposal to which this application for express consent covers, together with visualisations and details on the next page showing the before-and-after.

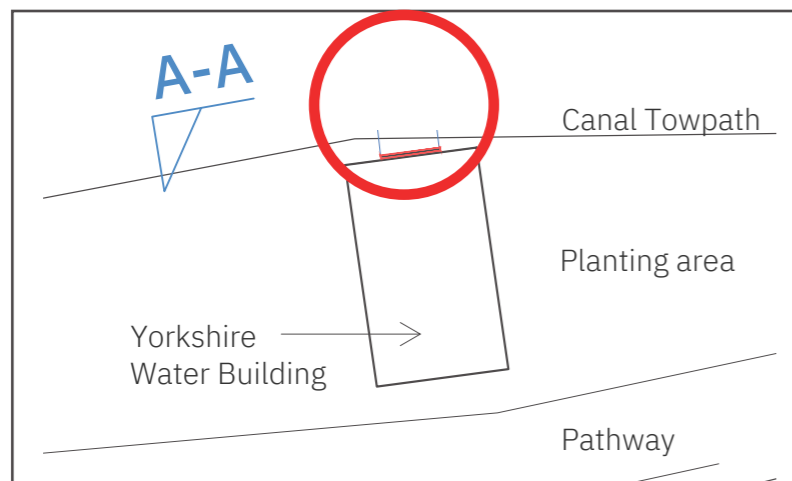
Proposal 01 - Details



Existing photograph of proposal location

New sign on Yorkshire Water Building

The majority of visitors access Standedge by entering the canal network through the access aside of Marsden Train Station opposite Lock 42. Once upon the towpath they will pass a small stone building owned by Yorkshire Water, which offers an opportunity to share our Give Campaign message without overly disrupting the surrounding environment. The sign is located on the gable end, which has limited long-range visibility in the setting but has strong visibility from the viewpoint directly aside of the gable end facing the canal towpath.



Block Plan extract



Proposed visualisation of sign on the Yorkshire Water Building gable end

Location

Yorkshire Water Building Gable End

Dimensions

110cm h x 80 cm w

Materials

Dibond composite sheet

Installation method

Fixed into mortar between stones

Further information

N/A