



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **CANAL CHARITY HOSTS NEW REFUGEE BEE HIVE PROJECT AT STANDEGE VISITOR CENTRE – The Buzz Project**

A new bee hive project organised by a Syrian refugee and Sanctuary Kirklees is set to get visitors buzzing at the Canal & River Trust's Standedge Tunnel Visitor Centre, near Marsden, West Yorkshire.

Dr Ryad Alsous, a world renowned bee-keeping expert and former professor of agriculture at Damascus University, has been invited to use the charity's land to establish his new Buzz Project, aimed at helping local refugees and job seekers to find a place and purpose in the community by keeping bees.

Historic waterways attraction Standedge Tunnel centre is providing a free home for up to 10 bee hives as well as storage space, meeting facilities and space for honey extraction.

Sanctuary Kirklees was awarded a grant from the West Yorkshire Police Commissioner's Safer Communities Fund, plus a donation from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to kick start The Buzz Project.

Dr Ryad Alsous BSc, MA, PhD, now living in Huddersfield, is a world-renowned expert on beekeeping and is responsible for setting up The Buzz Project, initially supported by Kirklees Council and now managed by Sanctuary Kirklees.

He said: "I am enormously grateful to everyone who has helped us with this project and in particular to the generosity and goodwill of the Canal & River Trust, the Safer Communities Fund, Sanctuary Kirklees and Kirklees Council who have given us this wonderful chance. As a refugee myself, I understand the issues and problems affecting the everyday life of people who have been displaced and who often carry emotional tensions and feeling of isolation arising from their experiences and memories.

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

“Many in this situation have had high level careers and so have an enormous amount to offer and contribute. This opportunity allows them to make a useful contribution and gain skills and expertise that will help them to fully integrate into the community.”

Standedge Tunnel is run by the Canal & River Trust charity and is the country’s highest, longest and deepest canal tunnel. Duty Manager Sam Christopher said: “Standedge Visitor Centre is set in a secluded valley amidst the spectacular scenery of West Yorkshire. We know people are happier and healthier near water so I can’t think of a more beautiful, peaceful place to keep bees and forget about the trauma of being exiled from your own country.

“Not many places are big enough to safely accommodate bees but our site is perfect. We hope our contribution will make a difference at a time of real need. We will enjoy telling the beekeepers all about our rich industrial history and in doing so help them feel part of our community.

“In time, we hope to be able to sell the honey in our shop and use it in food served at our waterside café. Everything starts with small steps and our own history shows that a good idea allied to hard work and innovation can be the start of something big.”

Standedge Tunnel was opened in 1811 and the construction of the tunnel represented industrial heritage at its finest, showing unprecedented technical ingenuity. There is no charge to enter the site, park or visit the exhibition centre. Visitors can also enjoy guided boat trips into Standedge Tunnel at weekends and selected days during the week.

For more information, contact Standedge Tunnel Visitor Centre on 01484 844298.  
[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

## **ENDS**

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### **Note to Editors**

Standedge Tunnel Visitor Centre is owned and run by the Canal & River Trust charity. The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that living waterways transform places and enrich

lives and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

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