

WITNESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF TOWN GREEN  
APPLICATION FOR STOKES LODGE PARKLANDS

WITNESS : STEWART WILLIAM MASON

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OCCUPATION : PENSIONS MANAGER.

I, and my partner, moved into Stokes Bishop in November 1995 and have always used Stokes Lodge. Either for exercise such as running, jinniel or simply walking. However, its real value to me and my partner has become apparent now that we have children. When the children were very young it was a great place for them to learn to walk (and fall) without harming themselves. And later when they were learning to ride their bikes it was a safe environment for them to do that. And even now they are older they still enjoy using the open space for all manner of informal games such as football / rugby / cricket rounds etc.

Having land such as Stokes Lodge nearby also now serves a vital function for me as a parent of a teenage boy. He is, obviously, keen to exercise some independence and having a safe environment such as Stokes Lodge enables me to let him do that as I am more than happy to let him "meet his mate" there. I would be far less happy to do that but for the fact that I know how safe Stokes Lodge is.

When using Stoke Lodge myself I have seen it used for a whole manner of different past-times be it sport, nature rambles, painting etc. Also my children attend / have attended the local school (Stoke Bishop of E School) and they have used it as part of the schools activities. In particular the school has used it for nature walks, orienteering and picnics. And at the end of each year the Year 6 children hold some kind of leavers picnic event where they get together for one final time before they start at all the different schools to which they will be going from Year 7 onwards.

We also enjoy the beauty and natural history of Stoke Lodge and often, when playing some informal game with my children I have stopped because I have spotted something unusual. For example on one occasion I stopped to watch a Red Kite circling over Stoke Lodge. And woodpeckers, finches, hedwings, Fieldfares frequently feed on the trees and shrubs.

Stoke Lodge must be protected for the benefit of both the current and future generations of local inhabitants and, therefore, I strongly support the application

Stuart [Signature]

