

Witness statement in support of Town Green Application for Stoke Lodge Parkland

Full name: John Richard Parsons

Current address 10, South Dene, Bristol. BS9 2BW (since 1980)

Occupation Retired Teacher

Our use of Stoke Lane Parkland during the time we have lived here:

We started using Stoke Lodge Parkland almost immediately after we moved into our new house in South Dene at the end of 1980. As at the time we were both teaching it was wonderful to find, so close to the house, such a quiet and peaceful place. A place where we could go for a gentle stroll and enjoy the beauty of the trees, and the open vista, and relax after the stresses of the day. Mostly we did this in the summer months when the evenings were longer but even in the winter months it was possible to use it at the weekend.

As time passed (since 1985) we have had nieces and nephews visit and to stay. At those times the parkland became the preferred venue for kicking a ball around; playing Rounders; French Cricket; tag; playing hide and seek amongst the old buildings and throwing Frisbees. When there was a fine day and there was a bit of a breeze we could fly kites and even attempt to get them airborne when there was barely the gentlest of breezes.

Throughout our time here one great source of pleasure has been the view from the first floor of our house, which at the back looks across the field towards Stoke Lodge itself. The cedars spreading their branches and the spring and autumn colours have been a continuing delight. As an ex-cricketer (University of Bristol Staff CC) who remembers playing, in the late 1960's, on a pitch at the bottom of field, it has been evocative to hear the sound of bat on ball. Over the last couple of years, since I stopped playing, taking an afternoon stroll round the boundary of the pitch just behind our house has been a joy.

After we retired our usage of the field has changed somewhat. We have used it for exercise more frequently than before. We have also used the facilities of the Stoke Lodge Centre to learn Spanish and I to brush up my French. In addition I have benefited by attended classes on Tai Chi and Pruning. Again the courses offered are not always available in other venues within an acceptable distance.

In the last few years the people living in South Dene and West Dene have used the ground to have a small gathering involving playing games and having a picnic as a means of creating a communal spirit and to get to know our neighbours. This has been very successful and there has always been a good turnout.

Because of the proximity of our house to the Parkland it has been simple for us to walk round to the gateway at the end of West Dene and generally we have used that entrance. During the whole of the 30 years we have lived here we have never been refused entry by anyone for any reason. There has always been open access for me and my wife and we have frequently used it to walk around the field for relaxation and exercise as well as to walk to the shops in Shirehampton Road and, from time to time, to the Mill House Public House.

For us, as we grow older, the most precious thing about the Stoke Lodge Parkland is the ability to have a place, where we can go to walk, which is in easy reach and where we can get some exercise in such a wonderful environment. There are other places, which are the equal of Stoke Lodge but not in easy walking distance. If the use of Stoke Lodge Parkland and the Adult Learning Centre were to go then It would be an unimaginable loss to this community.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signature



Date:

25/01/2011

Save Stoke Lodge Parkland - Application for Town Green Registration - Evidence Questionnaire

NAME of Witness Print	JOHN RICHARD FARRENS	
1	Your address when you used the land being claimed as "Town Green" and edged in red on Map "A"?	10 SOUTH DENE BRISTOL BS92BW
2	Your address when you knew the land edged in red on Map "A" was being used by the local inhabitants? If different from 1 above?	as above
3	Did you sign the map "A" attached to confirm your understanding of the extent of The Land being claimed? As "Town Green" edged in Red? And relates to the evidence	Yes
4	Confirm your agreement that the Locality or Neighbourhood is the Political Ward of Stoke Bishop plus parts of Westbury on Trym, Sea Mills and Coombe Dingle. Map "B"	Yes TMP
5	Please confirm that you have marked the location of your house on Map "B" with an X.	Yes
6	By what name, if any, is The Land edged in red on Map "A" known?	Stoke Lodge Parkland
7	Has the land, referred to in question 6, ever been known by any other name? If so what?	Stoke Lodge
8	For how many years have you known about the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	50 years
9	Between which years did you use the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	1961 - 1962 1966 → 1980 1980 occasionally since 1980 frequently.
10	Do you consider yourself to be a local inhabitant in respect of the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	Yes
11	During the time you have used the Land edged in red on Map "A", has the general pattern of use remained basically the same?	it differs now as the University uses it more since they took over the management

12	What recognisable facilities are available to the local inhabitants of your locality? Please tick all boxes that apply and add any other additional matters not covered					
	Local infants school	Local junior school	Local secondary school	Residents association	Neighbourhood watch	Neighbourhood Partnership
	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Community centre	Sports facility	Swimming pool	Library	Alt green space within easy walking	Area police
	Stable Bridge Village Hall ✓	Some at Combe Dingle		W-0-T ✓		Southmead? ✓
	Community activities	A central feature	Scout hut	other	other	other
	✓	???	✓			other
13	To your knowledge are there any public paths crossing the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
14	How do you gain access to the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
15	How do you travel to and from the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
16	Why do you go on to the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
17	How often do/did you use the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
18	What activities do/did you take part in on the Land edged red on Map "A"?					
19	Does your immediate family use the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
20	If so, for what?					
21	Do you know of any community activities that take place or have taken place on the Land edged in red on Map "A"?					
22	If so please list them and state when and for how long they have taken place?					
23	Do/did you participate in any of them?					
	<p>Yes - from end of West Dene to Shurhampton Road end of Cheyne Road, I think.</p> <p>From West Dene, or Cheyne Road or Shurhampton Road</p> <p>On foot</p> <p>Exercise, watch Rugby, Football, Peace + Beauty, collect book bars etc, in early days (up to 1980) occasionally since 1980-1997 2-3x per month since 1997 1 or 2x per week</p> <p>Cricket, walking, Jogging, spectating</p> <p>Family games with children</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>family games [see 18]</p> <p>Family fun day, Community picnic</p> <p>once.</p> <p>once.</p> <p>Yes</p>					

