

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION TO REGISTER LAND AT STOKE LODGE AS A NEW TOWN OR VILLAGE GREEN UNDER S15 (2) OF THE COMMONS ACT 2006

MR MEYER - APPLICANT

AND

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL- REGISTRATION AUTHORITY/OBJECTOR

I, Bob Hoskins of Bristol City Council . College Green, Bristol, BS99 7PH will say as follows:-

I am employed by Bristol City Council as a Landscape Manager in the Park's Team in the Council's Neighbourhood's Department. I make this statement in connection with the objection made by Bristol City Council in its capacity as the freeholder of the Stoke Lodge Playing Fields (the Playing Fields) of the application to register this site as a Town or Village Green.

I am an Area Landscape Manager and I supervise contracts in relation to grounds maintenance on all education sites within the City Council and as such advise the Council on all grounds maintenance issues. I joined the Council in 1965 and worked for it until 1972 and subsequently rejoined in 1981 until the present time. In 1965, I worked for Bristol Corporation as an apprentice groundsman until 1970. I was subsequently employed as Groundsman at Lawrence Weston Playing Fields until 1972. I then worked in private practice as a Landscape Operative for a Landscape Consultancy Company and returned to Avon County Council in January 1981 as a District Supervisor for school grounds in the northern area of Bristol which included Stoke Lodge. This also included responsibility for arboricultural issues. In 1995 my responsibilities changed to being responsible solely for arboricultural issues across the education grounds. In 1996 Avon County became Bristol City Council. I remained in the arboricultural role until 2012.

In my evidence I shall set out the details of my knowledge of the use of Stoke Lodge Playing Fields.

My first involvement with the Playing Fields, was in approximately 1981, when I took up the position of District Supervisor. This involved at least weekly visits to the Playing Fields, as I was the manager for the on site team and part of my role was to collect their time sheets.

I recall the erection of the Avon County Council signage on the Playing Fields in approximately 1985/6. These signs were put up on all Avon County education playing field sites, at what were considered to be the main entrances into playing fields which the public could access. Exhibit RVH 1 comprises a plan of the Playing Fields which indicates the approximate location of the signs which are still present at Stoke Lodge, plus two others which were erected by Avon County Council using the same wording as the other Avon signs still present on the Playing Fields, but which have since been removed. The wording on the signs made it clear not to trespass on this playing field and that requests for authorized use should be made to the Director of Education.

I am aware that during my involvement with the Playing Fields,, there has been a general awareness from members of the public that their use of the Playing Fields has been contentious. I recall that the public have been challenged regarding the use of the Playing Fields in respect of dogs use. On one occasion a member of my staff was assaulted by a dog walker when challenged to pick up dog

feces . As a result of this and other similar instances staff are reluctant to challenge members of the public who are using the Playing Fields without permission from the Council.

The first of the original signs, now removed, was fixed to a large Beech tree along the Ebenezer Footpath and is shown on exhibit RVH1. The tree is still in situ and I recall that this sign caused some concern to a resident of the housing in Woodland Grove as it apparently was very prominently in view from his kitchen window. I responded to his complaint by having the sign moved to a lower position on the tree.

Another sign was erected by Avon to the left of the main entrance gate in the approximate position shown on exhibit RVH 1.

R V Hoskins 

Date 1/8/2013