

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.

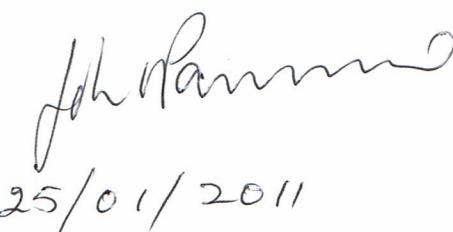
In the last few years the people living in South Dene and West Dene have used the ground to have a small gathering involving playing games and having a picnic as a means of creating a communal spirit and to get to know our neighbours. This has been very successful and there has always been a good turnout.

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

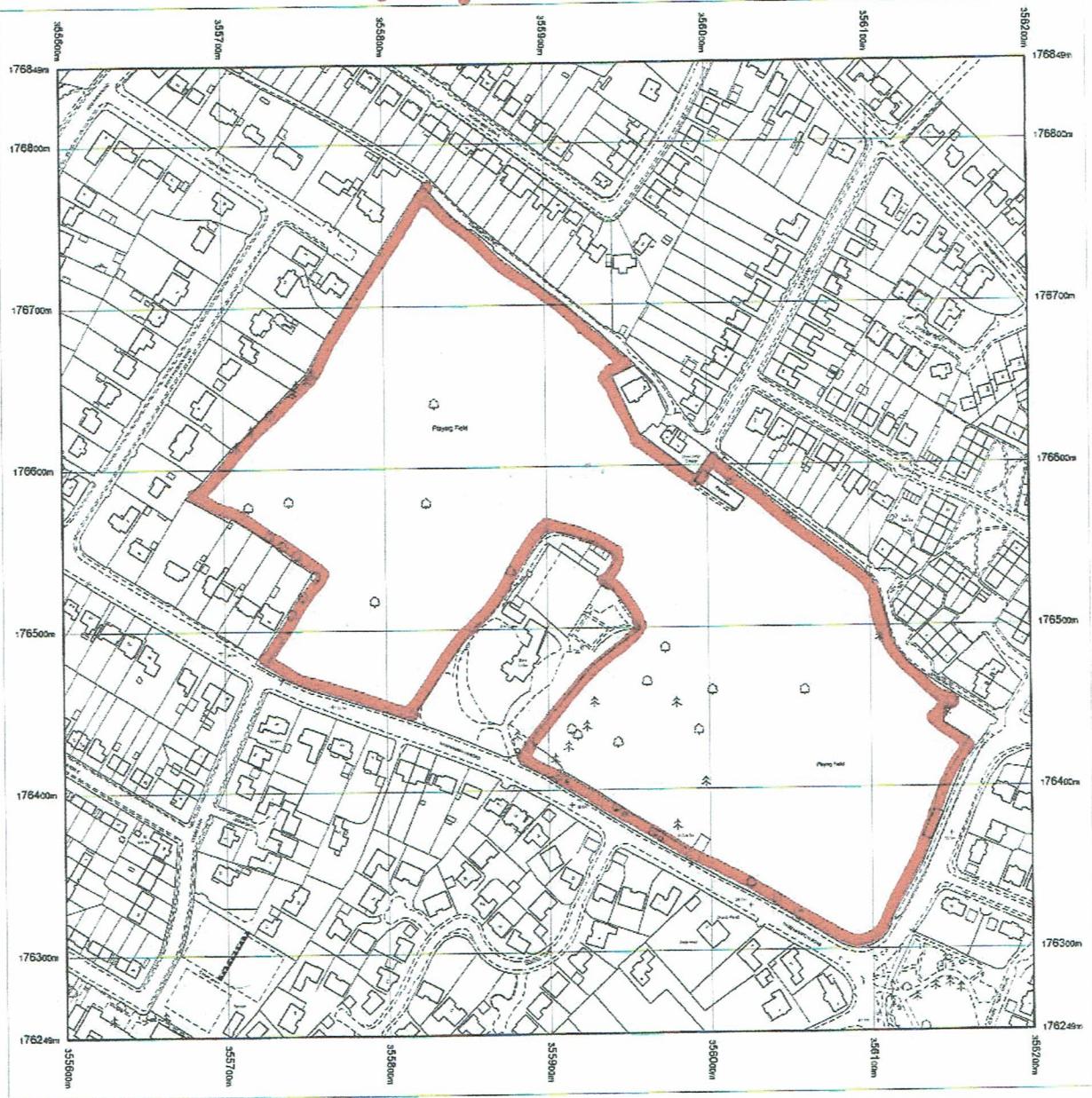
NAME of Witness Print	John Richard Parsons	
1 Your address when you used the land being claimed as "Town Green" and edged in red on Map "A"?		10 SOUTH DENE BRISTOL BS9 2BW
2 Your address when you knew the land edged in red on Map "A" was being used by the local inhabitants? If different from 1 above?		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 Map
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 → 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local infants school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local junior school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local secondary school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents association <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood watch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood Partnership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local place of worship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community centre <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports facility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Swimming pool <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Library <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alt green space within easy walking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Area police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctors surgery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shire Bishop Village Hall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some at Combe Dingle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scout hut <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> W-O-T <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Southmead? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community activities A central feature Scout hut other other other other other other other
13	To your knowledge are there any public paths crossing the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				Yes - from end of West Dene to Shirehampton Road, I think.
14	How do you gain access to the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				From West Dene, or Shirehampton Road
15	How do you travel to and from the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				On foot
16	Why do you go on to the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				Exercise, water sports, Football, Pease + Beauty, collect berries etc.
17	How often do/did you use the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				in early days (up to 1980) occasionally 1980-1997 2-3 x per month since 1997 1-2 x
18	What activities do/did you take part in on the Land edged red on Map "A"?				Cricket, walking, jogging, spectating and games with children
19	Does your immediate family use the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				Yes
20	If so, for what?				Family games [see 18]
21	Do you know of any community activities that take place or have taken place on the Land edged in red on Map "A"?				Family fun day, community picnic
22	If so please list them and state when and for how long they have taken place?				once
23	Do/did you participate in any of them?				yes

24	Do any organisations use the Land edged in red on Map "A" for sports or pastimes? If so, please specify.	Yes : University of Bristol Sports: Cricket, Football, Rugby Countryside - School Sports
25	Do any seasonal activities take place on the Land edged in red on Map "A"	Yes : Sport - Cricket, Football, Rugby
26	Please tick all the activities that you have seen taking place on the Land edged in red on Map "A"	
	Children playing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fêtes
	Rounders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Football
	Drawing and painting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rugby
	Dog Walking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cricket
	Team Games (Formal)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bird watching
	Team Games (informal)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Picnicking
	Picking blackberries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kite flying
	Community celebrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People walking
27	Do you know the name of the owner of the Land edged in red on Map "A"? And if so please state.	I assume Bristol City Council
28	Do you know the name of the occupier of the Land edged in red on Map "A"? And if so please state.	as above but managed by the University of Bristolcombe Dingle .
29	Has the owner or occupier seen you on the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	I assume so - they have been working in the Parkland .
30	What did they say? If anything?	nothing .
31	Was permission ever sought by you for activities on the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	No
32	If so, from whom and when?	No
33	Did anyone ever give you permission to go onto the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	No yes in 1960's
34	If yes, when and for what reason?	To play cricket for the University of Bristol Cricket Club .
35	Have you ever been prevented from using the Land edged in red on Map "A"?	No

36	If yes, when and for what reason?	
37	Has any attempt been made by any means to prevent or discourage the use being made of the Land edged in red on Map "A" by local inhabitants?	Not that I know of.
38	If yes, give examples and dates	/
39	Are you aware of any signs or notices restricting access to the Land edged in red on Map "A" by local inhabitants?	No
40	Do you have any photographs or any other evidence of use of the Land edged in red on Map "A" by local inhabitants?	No
41	Are you willing to allow us to copy them for use as part of our application?	
42	If you have additional information please attach a separate statement? (witness statement etc)	
43	If you have knowledge of others who may be in a position to complete an evidence form, would you please write their names and addresses upon the reverse of this form.	
44	I have carried on the activities referred to in this questionnaire, on the Land edged in red on Map "A", for 30 + years without anybody trying to stop me and I believe the activity should be treated by the law as having a lawful origin.	
45	I understand that the evidence form I have completed in relation to this application may become public knowledge and I authorise the applicant to disclose this form to anyone reasonably requiring access to this application.	
46	I also understand that this evidence may be presented at a non-statutory inquiry and I authorise the applicant to use this form for that purpose.	
47	Signed	J M Lawrence
48	Name	John Richard Parsons
49	Date	28 January 2011

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MAP 'A'



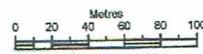
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The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way.

The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.



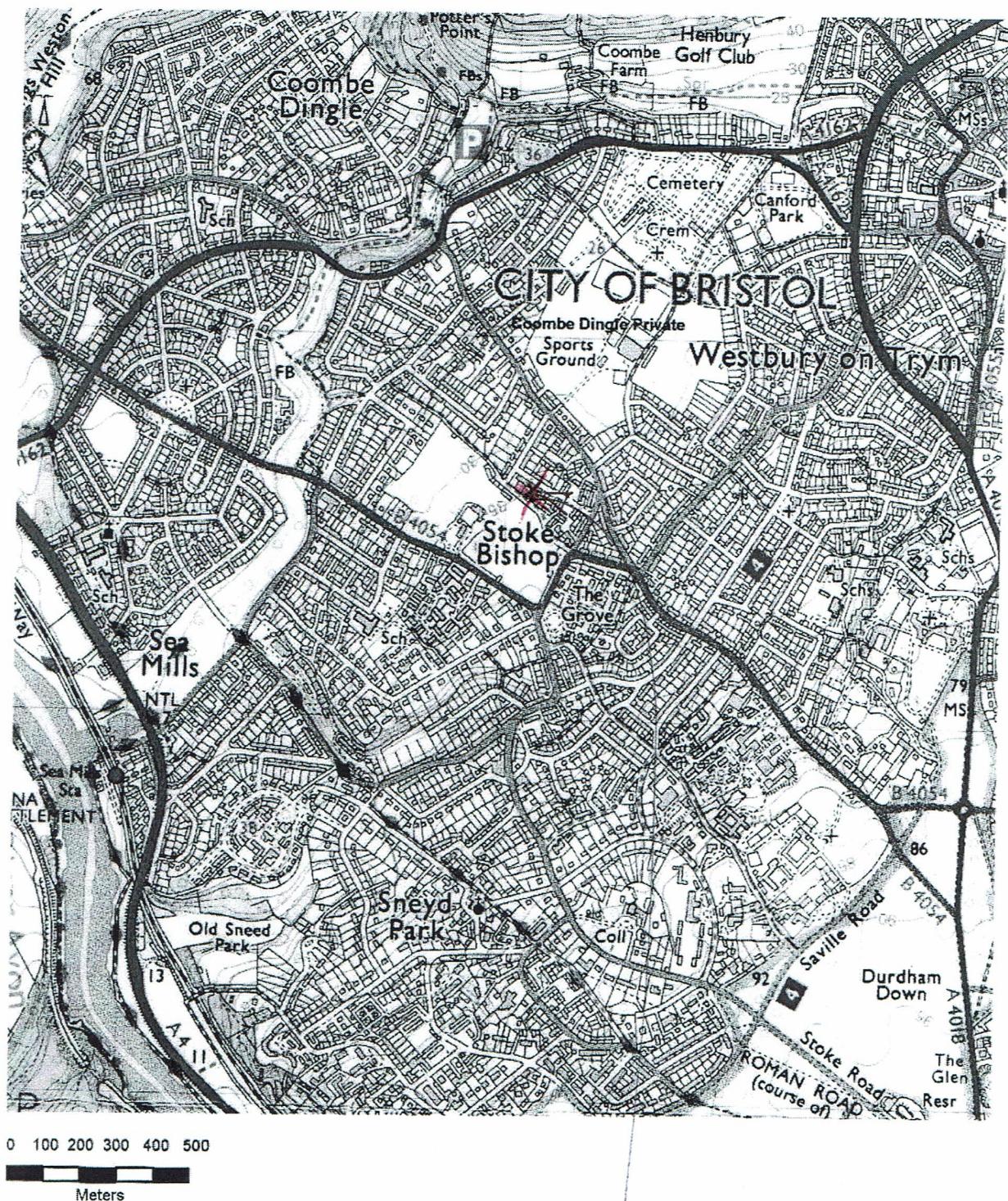
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Further information can be found on the
OS Sitemap Information leaflet or the
Ordnance Survey web site:
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

M. Palmer

Map "B" of locality surrounding Stoke Lodge Parkland



10. South Dene