

BOLD RESIDENTS' ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

'Guerilla tactics' to clear footpath

By Bruno Clements

FEELINGS ran so high over a blocked Bristol short-cut that a commando-style raid was mounted to clear it.

About 20 Stoke Bishop people crowded into a van on Saturday morning, using an indirect route to arrive at the controversial spot in Cheyne Road without causing suspicion.

The van was backed up to the access and the gap in the boundary hedge cleared in 30 minutes.

Police arrived only after the van, laden with wood and debris, had been driven away to a tip.

This access to Stoke Lodge has been in use for at least 40 years until it was filled in by someone during the summer, said one woman. "It is a favourite short-cut to Stoke Lodge, the shops and the playing fields."

Punch-up

"I have used it for 35 years since I played on the fields as a girl and others say it has been in use much longer. There was a stile there."

"We tried to clear it a few weeks ago but it nearly ended in a punch-up then. We have seen a solicitor about this but it was taking so long to sort out."

"Everyone felt so strongly that something had to be done. The police were very good and it was all very civilised."

"Yesterday there were dozens of people out there walking to make sure it stays open."

A spokeswoman for Avon County Council, which owns the land, said there were worries about motorcycles being ridden onto the fields and a fence with a kissing gate is to be put in.



Victory ... now the protesters must make sure the way stays open