

In an inquiry relating to:

**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Section 53**

**City Council of Bristol Definitive Map and Statement
Modification Order No.7 2024**

Planning inspectorate reference:	ROW/3363939
Applicant:	Mr Alan William Preece
Order Making Authority:	Bristol City Council
Date of Inquiry:	6 October 2026

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

ANNA CAPLE

Dated 6 September 2026

Proof of Evidence

I, Anna Caple, of [REDACTED] Avening Green, Tortworth, Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 8HD write this proof of evidence in support of Professor Alan Preece's application that the City Council of Bristol Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order (No. 7) 2024 should be confirmed.

1. This statement gives evidence for all the routes but primarily for Route 4: F-G-I-H on the Order Plan, the Yellow Route.

The Yellow Route

2. I was born in 1966 and even before I was born, my parents were using Stoke Lodge. Our home at [REDACTED] Bell Barn Road was within easy walking distance of the Cheyne Road entrance so over the decades this has long been the start of any journey along the footpaths of Stoke Lodge. My first uses of the routes would've been in my pram then later being wheeled across on my bike which is a lot quicker than getting a child to walk as any parent will know. Although this statement mainly relates to the Yellow Route, I naturally used the other routes whenever they suited where I was going but in the context of the Yellow Route, I would have been taken to the shops on Stoke Lane and for visits with friends on Parrys Lane and Coombe Lane.
3. I would describe the orientation of the Yellow Route as going directly from Cheyne Road entrance towards the pavilion and out at West Dene.
4. As I grew up, I remember walking more often with my sister and Mum, (they both submitted evidence forms in 2025). If we had sandals or flip-flops on in the summer and the grass had just been cut, our feet would be green from the cuttings. My sister and I used to want to explore the pavilion but we were never allowed of course, and anyway we would've been on our way to Canford Park, or Stoke Lane shops to the post office or to pick up other things Mum might need. It did take longer to walk but being bundled into the car and taken shopping was a chore and we really enjoyed walking. We would take a dolls pram sometimes and if we bought quite a few things we would use it to carry them home to save Mum carrying the bags.

5. As a teenager and gaining independence, I would often walk to my friend's house on Bell Barn Road, number [REDACTED] and on up Cheyne Road, we would use all the routes across Stoke Lodge as we had friends all over the locality but she was my closest friend. Our favourite destination would be Canford Park and Westbury shops because there is a far greater variety there. We would take the Yellow Route exiting at West Dene and walk through what is now Coombe Dingle Sports Centre. We could exit at the far end and walk past the allotments and through the cemetery to get to the park and onto the shops if we wanted. We usually walked back the same way. It's quite a way, but we were teenagers and we were in absolutely no hurry at all, chatting and enjoying our new independence. I would do all this with my sister as well so all in all I would walk this route quite frequently during school holidays, perhaps weekly if the weather was dry but less often if it was wet, during the Christmas holidays for example. In term time we would walk the Yellow or Green Route most Saturdays to get to local shops during nice weather as long as we'd done our homework, the use of the Green Route for Shirehampton Road or Druid Hill shops decreasing and use of the Yellow Route for Stoke Lane, Canford Park and Westbury increasing as we got older.
6. If I was going to Stoke Lane to the shops and it was wet underfoot, I would possibly, along with my friend perhaps, have intended to walk the full length of Stoke Lodge on the Blue Route and come out on Parrys Lane but especially during poorer weather we would be more likely to take the Yellow Route, and exit behind the pavilion. I far preferred walking on Stoke Lodge than the pavements, because to me it was a much more enjoyable route, but sometimes a hard surface is more convenient.
7. Once I was married and had my own children from 1998, the cycle started again with me taking my children to the shops, often with Mum. This might be twice a month through late spring and summer into the autumn but infrequently during the winter, probably once every six weeks if and when the weather was conducive to a long walk. By now, the shops had changed, but we would still take them to Stoke Lane and they loved walking the same footpath (Yellow Route) that I had as a child and playing in Canford Park.

Use of other routes

8. There are several groups of shops which are situated close to the entrances around Stoke Lodge so of course over the decades I used all of them.

9. Before I was old enough to walk to Stoke Lane and Canford Park, from about the age of eight, I was trusted to walk with my friend down Bell Barn Road to the Shirehampton Road shops to post a letter or pick up a few things from the shops for Mum. Most often I remember going to the green grocers on the corner, but there was a shop called The Kiosk, a newsagent and sweet shop, where we could buy a few things with our pocket money. If our mums had agreed, we were allowed to walk up Shirehampton Road and go in to Stoke Lodge to eat our "picnic". It was our treat for running these small errands although my memory is that we kept walking and did not sit on the grass, I'm fairly sure that most of our sweets had gone before we got in but it was a very pleasant detour. Again, this was weather dependent but as far as I can recall it would have started infrequently and become as often as fortnightly as I grew older and more capable and during warmer months. It is too long ago for me to be more accurate than this but my memory is that while it started out as being something special it was nothing extraordinary by the time I was around ten years old.
10. We had to stick to the path and not talk to strangers and there was a well-known route from the Shirehampton Road entrance to the top of Cheyne Road (Route 3, the Green route). The Green Route is significantly shorter than walking along Bell Barn Road and Shirehampton Road and was used by many as a shortcut. For us it was longer in this context but intentional because we preferred it to the main roads. We would come in at the entrance to the Adult Learning Centre, go along the drive a bit and turn down the field towards the Cheyne Road oak. We would leave the driveway and go down onto the grass once the trees had opened up again which would be just after the big Lucombe oak as far as I can recall. I don't recall ever having to open any gate and we absolutely never climbed over gates because that would have implied that we shouldn't be there and we wouldn't have gone in. The same applies for West Dene: we would never have gone somewhere where we would have had to unbolt a gate or climb over. I used the Green route independently from around 1975 but my Mother's evidence is that she used it from 1963 going to the local shops or on social visits and of course she would have had me with her from 1966 onwards.
11. I went to Clifton High School from 1976 to 1984 and their playing fields were on the opposite side of Parrys Lane from Stoke Lodge. During those school years when we were timetabled with PE in the afternoon (which would have been two separate years between 1977/8 and 1981/2, although I can't remember exactly which ones) I could

walk home from school with a friend which would have been the entrance at Parrys Lane, following Route 1, the Blue route, to Cheyne Road. This would've been a weekly occurrence during term time unless it was cancelled. I also had friends living on Druid Hill and beyond, Parrys Lane and Coombe Lane, and I would use all the routes to get to and from their houses for socialising. Again, I could have walked along the pavements but taking the footpaths across Stoke Lodge was often shorter and always more pleasant. No one ever stopped me and told me I shouldn't be there and I never saw any sign telling me there was no entry to the parkland. It was a frequently and commonly used space and never once did anyone I spoke to lead me to believe that there was any reason not to use it. I used the Blue route independently from around 1978 but my Mother's evidence is that she used it from 1963 going to the local shops or on social visits and of course she would have had me with her from 1966 onwards.

12. Walking along these other routes with my children, we would sometimes come across items left behind, most commonly a tennis ball or item of clothing which had been left or lost and they would take great delight in retrieving it and leaving it somewhere along the route for the owners to find when they came back. Teaching them what to do in these types of situations, spotting birds and wildlife and learning to identify trees as we walked is a huge part of children's development and so much more valuable than walking along busy roads. Stoke Lodge was always a very safe place to do this.
13. Today, old friendships have changed and friends have moved away but I still have local friends and reasons to walk across the footpaths over Stoke Lodge, and do so once or twice a month, sometimes seeing familiar faces to chat to along the way, people with shopping bags, pushing children in pushchairs or on bikes reminding me of the way my parents and I used Stoke Lodge throughout our lives.
14. I never sought or received permission from anyone to use the route.

SUMMARY

15. In summary I have used the following Routes over the following periods:

Blue Route: 1966 to present

Green Route: 1966 to present

Proof of Evidence of Anna Caple
Date: September 2026
For the Applicant
APP/AC/1

Yellow Route: 1966 to present

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this proof of evidence are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth

Signed: _____

ANNA CAPLE

Dated: 6 - SEPTEMBER 2026