

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

GEOFFREY CAUSTON

Dated 3 September 2026

Proof of Evidence

1. I, Geoffrey Causton, of [REDACTED] Druid Stoke Avenue 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.

The Blue Route

2. From 1985 until 2018 my wife and I regularly used to walk the Blue Route (678 and 683 from A to F on the Order Map) across Stoke Lodge from our home in Druid Stoke Avenue via Druid Hill top to Cheyne Road to visit friends in Bell Barn Road. We did this about 24 times a year (about twice a month). The Blue Route is the most direct route from Druid Hill to the Cheyne Road entrance to Stoke Lodge and there was a worn path that made walking easier. We always preferred walking across this beautiful green space with its views of Blaise and Kingsweston instead of the pavements on busy Shirehampton Road and it's shorter too. Unfortunately in recent years our path has been blocked by the unnecessary gates and fence that Cotham School have erected on Stoke Lodge at points A and G on the Order Map. We do walk the same route when we can but after Cotham School's fence went up in 2019 we never knew when the gates would be open which made it difficult.

3. Prior to early 2019 when the fence went up, we never encountered any obstacles to our use at any time of day or on any day of the week. We were never told that we could not use the route and there have never been any signs on the entrances we used to suggest that there was any restriction on walking across the field. I never sought or received permission from anyone to use the route as I, and countless others, presumed Stoke Lodge was public property. We have never seen or heard of any trouble or disturbance on Stoke Lodge in the 40 years we've been crossing this lovely public green space.

4. Very rarely did we encounter any sports being played on Stoke Lodge and when we did we would go slightly out of our way to accommodate play just as we would for other walkers. There were very seldom any pitch lines on the field for the first 20 years we walked across the field, and occasionally there was a game of cricket near the pavilion which didn't block our route.

The Red Route

5. I can also confirm that we have also used the Red Route (from H to C on the Order Map) between 1978 and 1985 when we lived in Stoke Grove, Westbury-on-Trym. My wife and I would use the route to cross the field to get to Shirehampton Road shops, the bus stop and to meet friends at the Millhouse pub. We would do this once or twice a month and again there was a worn path to the house across the field and it was the shortest distance to my destination. We were never challenged and like everyone living locally, I used the route as a matter of course, regularly and openly. We were never told that we could not use the route, again there were never any physical obstacles in the way of our use, and there were no signs suggesting that there was any restriction on walking across the field.

Summary

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

Blue route: 1985 to present

Red route: 1978 to 1985

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

GEOFFREY CAUSTON

Dated: 3 September 2026