Proof of Evidence – Linda Powell:

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
The Definitive Map and Statement of
Public Rights of Way for Gloucestershire

Ref: ROW/3377321 - Additional Public Footpaths across land known as Verney Fields and Surrounding Area, Stonehouse Parish Modification Order 2025

&

Ref: & ROW/3365454 - Additional Public Footpath Connecting Oak Way and MST30, Stonehouse Parish Modification Order 2025

1. **Witness Statement**
2. My name is Linda Powell. I make this statement in support of my evidence regarding my long-standing use of Doverow and the difficulties I experienced following a change of landownership in 2023.
3. **Use of Doverow**
4. I have used Doverow regularly for many years. I walk there with my dogs every day, usually early in the morning and again in the late afternoon
5. In addition to walking, I have used the area for foraging, picnicking with my grandchildren, and previously with my own children, listening to birdsong, observing wildlife, and for my general health and wellbeing. During periods of heavy snowfall, my children and grandchildren also used Doverow for sledging.
6. In earlier years, there were many deer and muntjac in the area, although I rarely see them now. I have always valued the peace, tranquillity and solitude that Doverow provides.

7. Change in Access

8. For approximately forty years, I used Doverow without interruption or difficulty. This changed after the change of landownership in 2023, subsequent access became increasingly difficult. Nevertheless, I continued to use the land openly and in the same manner as I had always done. I did not use the land in secret, nor did I remove any obstructions such as fences which were installed in 2023 to use a path.

9. Obstructions and Difficulties Experienced

10. Following the change in ownership I encountered a number of obstructions and difficulties, including trenches dug across paths, barbed wire, and locked gates that had been covered in grease.

11. At times, I felt funnelled onto routes bordered by dense brambles and nettles. I also encountered steep and narrow steps which frequently filled with water during wet weather, making them difficult to use.

12. The concrete seat beneath the Great Oak, which I had often used to rest after a steep climb, was smashed to pieces.

13. The new landowner also damaged the kissing gate at the top of MST30, shown at point D on the appended order plan, which, to the best of my knowledge, had been in place since shortly after the First World War.

14. Four old caravans were placed on the land: one at the bottom of MST30, one at the top, and two adjacent to MST68/28. Over time, these caravans deteriorated significantly, some were set on fire, and they became a hazard to walkers, dogs and wildlife.

15. Notices and Incident on the Footpath

16. I recall that numerous notices were erected shortly after the new landowners took over the land in 2023. These notices were either staked into the ground or attached to kissing gates throughout the area.

17. I also recall one occasion when I was forced to turn back because the footpath had been blocked. The new landowners son Mr Nagai was present at the location and appeared to be carrying out work there.

18. On that occasion, I climbed over a five-bar gate into the adjoining field. Mr Nagai took a photograph of me and later posted it on Facebook during the challenge period. Nothing was said to me at the time.

19. In my view, the new landowners actions demonstrated an intention to discourage members of the public from accessing and using the land.

20. Use of the Land

21. At the outset, the new landowner stated that the land would be used for fruit farming and wildlife conservation via a noticeboard. It referred to parts of the land as "Spring Farm" and "Windmill Farm". However, to my knowledge, no fruit or other crops have ever been planted there.

22. I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief this is a true statement.

Signature... [redacted] ..... **Date.** 17/9/2026