

**THE LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT OF  
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

**PUBLIC FOOTPATH FROM BANKS ROAD TO STATION ROAD, NORTH MEOLS,  
WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH (DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION) ORDER  
2014**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
THOMAS HOWARD**

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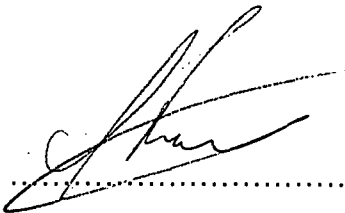
1. My name is Tom Howard and I live at 75 Station Road, Banks. I am a retired buildings and maintenance contractor.
2. I completed a user evidence form in 2012 confirming my usage on foot of the route that runs from Banks Road to Station Road (which I refer to as the "Sluice Path").
3. I have known the Sluice Path for as long as I can remember having grown up in Banks. I started to use the Sluice Path when I was about 10 years old (1958) and lived on Hesketh Avenue with my parents. I used to walk along the Sluice Path (from point I to point A) to get to my friends' houses at the Ferry - this is the row of houses at Fiddlers Ferry on Banks Road near point A. We would then go and play around Banks marsh or go back along the Sluice Path to fish on the sluice.
4. I think, when I was a child, there was a stile at point A. This did not prevent people from using the Sluice Path on foot.
5. When I got married, 45 years ago, I moved from my parents' to my current address on Station Road, which is very close to the end of the Sluice Path (point I). I then used to walk along the Sluice Path a lot, walking our dog to the marsh or using it as a cut through to the other side of the village.

6. I stopped being able to walk along the full length of the Sluice Path in around 2002 when Mr Crook blocked it off where the sluice bears left (point B) using wooden posts and barbed wire. I can't recall if this happened just before Mr Crook starting using the adjacent field for car boot sales. I do remember that once the fence went up I could no longer reach Banks Road along the Sluice Path. At some point, Mr Crook blocked up the gap in the hedge at point A too.
7. After the fence went up at point B, a big sign was erected on the fence stating that it was private.
8. Once the Sluice Path had been blocked, I continued to walk along the Path from point I as far as point B and then back again. I took my dog for a walk most evenings along this route.
9. During the many years I have used the Sluice Path, I have passed other people walking along it too. It was a very popular route for walkers living on my side of the village to reach the other side of the village. I never saw anybody riding a horse along the Sluice Path.
10. Prior to the Sluice Path being blocked at point B there were never any signs up indicating that the Sluice Path was private and access to the public was prohibited.
11. In all the years I have used the Sluice Path I have never done so secretly and I have never been challenged whilst using it.
12. I have never asked for, nor have ever been given permission to walk along the Sluice Path.
13. I have never worked for any owner of the land crossed by the Sluice Path whilst the land was in their ownership. I have worked for Mr Crook in the past but this was only for a year in around 1974 and was before he owned part of the land crossed by the Sluice Path.
14. In summary, I was a regular user of the full length of the Sluice Path on foot for 44 years from 1958 to 2002. Since 2002 to the present day I have only

been able to walk between point I and point B which I have done on an almost daily basis.

**STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:  .....

Date: 15/5/2020 .....