


**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**

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
IAN MELDON**

1. My name is Ian Meldon and I currently live in Italy working as a digital archivist but I grew up in Banks during the 1980s and 1990s.
2. In 2012 I completed a user evidence form confirming my usage on foot of the path that runs from Banks Road to Station Road (which I refer to as the "Sluice Path"). This statement provides further detail about that usage.
3. From 1978 I lived with my family at 20 Ralph's Wife's Lane in Banks. This is very close to the start of the Sluice Path on Banks Road (point A on the Order Plan).
4. I first started using the Sluice Path independently from around the mid-1980s, when I was about 7/8 years of age and I was allowed to go out on my own to play with friends. However, I may have walked along the Sluice Path before that time on family walks. I had friends who lived on Station Road and Banks Road so we used the Sluice Path regularly to connect us with each other. As a young child, when the weather was fine and during the summer months, I would use the Sluice Path two or three times per week.
5. In the early 1990s I bought a mountain bike and then I used to use the Sluice Path once or twice a week on my bike. I would use the Path to ride to places like Mere Brow Moss by following the sluice.

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6. From 1991 to 1994, I delivered the free weekly local newspaper around the village and I used the Sluice Path once a week on my delivery route.
7. As a teenager, my friends and I would often use the Sluice Path as a meeting point and would spend time along there catching up. We also used it as a means of reaching another meeting point at the remains of the footings of a Victorian railway bridge near the disused railway line south of Station Road. I distinctly remember going there the weekend before I went away to university in September 1996.
8. I continued to use the Sluice Path, although less often once I started university, until the late 1990s when a sturdy plank fence appeared across the Path on Banks Road. This prevented access to the Sluice Path from point A which was the nearest access point from my home. A few years later, an aggressively worded sign framed in barbed wire appeared on the fence at point A.
9. During the years that I was using the Sluice Path, I used it with other people (*family and friends*) and saw other members of the public using it too. It was a common fisherman's path as well. I don't recall seeing any horse riders on this Path.
10. Access to the Sluice Path and all the way along it was always open. I don't remember having to climb over any gates or fences. From Station Road (point I) the Path had the appearance of being a gravel road for about one third of the way along - up to the area that was historically used by the council as a bin facility (point E on the Order Plan). From this point the Path transitioned from a gravel road to a grass path for the remainder of the route. Where the Path crossed the field on Banks Road (between point A and B), I recall that field being ploughed quite deeply but the farmer used to leave a strip of land clear where the footpath lay.
11. I never asked for permission to use the Sluice Path and I was never given permission.

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12. There was never any signs on the Sluice Path prior to it being blocked indicating that it was private land.
13. I was never challenged when using the Sluice Path.
14. I have never been employed by any of the owners of the land crossed by the Path.
15. In summary, I used the full length of the Sluice Path on foot and bicycle between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

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

Signed: 

Date: 14/5/2020