

Match Day Catering Survey by OxVox – Summary of Results

This is a summary of the results of a quick survey of all adult members of OxVox in late October 2007.

The survey was conducted primarily by email, and by post to members without email facilities.

A total of 85 replies were received by 7 November 2007.

The aim of the survey was to explore whether there was evidence of a demand from supporters for additional catering options, and to ask their views on the options currently available.

A. Bars

We asked about the current level of use of the Exhibition Bar. Very few of the respondents replied that they use the Exhibition Bar regularly on a match day, and over half said they never use it.

1.	How often do you use the current Exhibition Bar on a match day?	Number	Percent
	Never	47	55
	Occasionally	31	36
	Most matches	4	5
	Every match	3	4
	Total	85	100

We asked whether a number of new features in a revamped bar would make it more attractive. Respondents could tick any number of the listed options.

There was a good level of support for a new bar which offered a range of drinks at attractive prices, a comfortable environment, with televised football, in a room with some club identity.

2.	If a new match day bar was offered as an alternative, which of these features would make it more likely you would use it (tick as many as apply)?	Number	Percent
	Good choice of drinks at reasonable prices	68	80
	Comfortable environment, seats etc	58	68
	Club identity to the room	54	64
	Large screen TV for live football	51	60
	Child-friendly and family-friendly environment	35	41
	Other (please describe)	19	22
	Total	85	100

Asked how often they would use such a facility, many respondents said they would be likely to use it regularly.

3.	If such a match day bar were set up how often would you use it?	Number	Percent
	Never	5	6
	Occasionally	27	32
	Most matches	42	49
	Every match	11	13
	Total	85	100

Comments received from supporters on what they would like to see from a new food service:

- Nice selection of food. Healthy option.
- Simple and well prepared food at realistic prices like Wycombe Wanderers. Only pie & chips, fish and chips and sausage & chips.
- Bookies, catering, rolls, pies etc.
- Good cider on draught.
- Traditional hand-pumped beer.
- Efficient service
- Small queues at the bar.
- Table football!
- And staff that actually care what their doing not minimum wage slaves.
- Owned facility with financial benefits to the club.
- I usually have a meal at the ground because I travel from Cambridgeshire - but the bar with somewhere to sit would be a good and perhaps cheaper option. As it is now - it is an unfriendly open space.
- If money spent on the catering went directly to benefit the club. Until that happens I will not use the concourse catering.
- Some financial benefit to the club.
- I'll ONLY use it if the revenue goes to the Club and not to some form of StadCo.
- RUN BY SUPPORTERS FOR SUPPORTERS.
- If my mates used it too.
- Food before or after matches.
- Enough staff to cater for large numbers.

B. New food options

We asked about food options which would be of interest. A fifth said they would not use any food option, almost a half would like low price fast food, and a quarter would use a sandwich bar.

4.	If new food options were added to the bar, which of these options would you be most likely to use?	Number	Percent
	Low price fast food e.g. sausage and chips/pies/burgers	38	45
	Sandwiches and salad bar	23	27
	None	18	21
	Other e.g. vegetarian food (please give details)	9	11
	Total	85	100

Note: Total number of responses listed in the first four lines of the table is 88 - three respondents ticked more than one option.

Comments received under 'other':

- Better quality pub type food e.g. scampi, chicken and chips.
- Sweets/ crisps for kids.
- Something for veggies - chips and pies OK, as long as veggie option available. And veggie does NOT mean chicken, despite what the concourse caterers tell me!
- Vegetarian fast food.
- The main issue for me is price. After the cost of a ticket + bus fare, there is very little left for either a drink or food. Quality is a secondary issue but should not be overlooked!
- Vegetarian, including burgers, salads and sandwiches / toasted sandwiches, Panini.
- Vegetarian food.
- More veggie options.
- Vegetarian food (especially snacky stuff like samosas).

We also asked how often they would be likely to use such a facility. A third said they would use it for most matches or every match, four out of ten would use it occasionally, and a fifth would not use it at all.

5.	How often would you expect to buy food in the bar?	Number	Percent
	Never	18	21
	Occasionally	35	41
	Most matches	27	32
	Every match	3	4
	No reply	2	2
	Total	85	100

C. Concourse catering

We asked supporters whether they currently bought anything from the concourse catering outlets. Eight out of ten either never bought anything, or did so only occasionally.

6.	How often do you buy anything from the concourse catering outlets?	Number	Percent
	Never	31	36
	Occasionally	38	45
	Most matches	13	15
	Every match	3	4
	Total	85	100

No-one rated the concourse catering as very good and only one person rated it as good. A quarter rated it as fair, and approximately a third each rated it as poor or very poor.

7.	How do you rate the concourse catering overall?	Number	Percent
	Very good	0	0
	Good	1	1
	Fair	20	24
	Poor	30	35
	Very poor	29	34
	No reply	5	6
	Total	85	100

Comments received on the concourse catering:

- Too expensive to represent value for money. £1.50 for a plastic cup of tea compares poorly with many Step 5 non-league clubs where tea in a china mug costs about 50p.
- Too expensive (exploiting us). Not enough variety.
- Poor range of items, over-priced.
- Service OK, choice of food poor, choice of food criminally unhealthy.
- Very pricey, and the quality of food is poor and usually lukewarm.
- I use the sports bar or F and B s.
- Drinks are far too expensive.
- Too expensive, no choice for vegetarians, and most importantly, the club doesn't benefit from me spending money there.
- Quality tends to be reasonable, but doesn't provide value for money. Only use the concourse catering outlets as a last resort.
- I have been sold out of date products before (which I didn't notice until too late). They also

frequently run out of certain products.

- These outlets are under-staffed and overpriced by some people who speak little or no English. Because of this you need to miss five minutes of the first half or miss the beginning of the second half if you want a drink or food. If properly resourced and organised 98% of people could be served during half time.
- I find the concourse bar poorly managed (no clear system of queuing usually leads to people just barging in), slow as a result, expensive, and as a vegetarian and ale drinker, not appetising!
- It is expensive - but no more expensive than at other football grounds.
- Service is terrible, all items ridiculously overpriced, very poor choice. And the money goes to FK!
- Prices too high, service takes too long, should be dedicated service point for: hot drinks, soft drinks, food etc.
- I accept crap food for too much money because that is what you get everywhere. It is the poor service, ever changing staff and lack of common sense. Why can't they realise there will be a rush at half time and get the cold drinks and beer out of the fridge and handy to sell quickly. The catering staff cover more ground than the team on the pitch do.
- Very factory made, disgusting hot dogs and burgers. Had it once and felt ill for the rest of the day. No doubt doing a little better after the burger vans changed and became the worst burger van in Oxfordshire!
- Prices are unreasonable and the food is awful.
- My main gripe is price. It is unrealistic to expect us to pay such a lot for a ticket to the match AND such high prices for something to eat.
- Jacket Potatoes reasonably priced with a range of toppings should be considered.
- At peak times they need more staff.
- Everything about it is poor. Quality, price, speed of service etc.
- Overpriced, understaffed, and takes far too long to serve up a pie and a beer.
- There are no vegetarian / healthy options. It also takes too long to get served and expensive. I always bring my own healthy drink. As the club gets no profit I will not purchase anything anyway
- Poor Range, High Prices, standard quality.
- Lack of catering at the half time interval, you have to choose from what's left.
- Value for money is very poor with low quality at high prices, slow and inefficient service. The environment around the catering areas is awful so there is no reason to go into the stadium until as late as possible. Even the TVs that were available are no longer in place under the East Stand so even less reason to stand in the catering areas.
- Taste of food this year is very poor compared to last year, change the catering back I say.
- Food runs out before the end of half time, but there is still at least one person stood behind the ovens "preparing" the non-existent food. Having normal sized chocolate would be good rather than the foot long things they have now. Finally getting cider (although not a very good one) after all this time (and asking many times before) is a good step forward.
- People make a fuss about the concourse catering but in comparison to other football clubs it's better than average. Obviously it's not Raymond Blanc, but it's more than ok.
- Far too expensive for drinks and food. A couple of coffees or teas and a couple of bags of crisps and you don't get much change out of a fiver.
- Hot beverages grossly overpriced compared to other football grounds. Don't buy the beer there so can't really comment, but have been told the bottled beer is very expensive. Sometimes under staffed and sometimes run out of stock of food/drinks not necessarily related to size of crowd.
- Actually I would have selected "Health hazard that should probably be closed down immediately" if the option was available.
- Chips and non-Nestle chocolate would be good. Coffee is terrible.
- As with the outside outlets - ALL the catering at the United Stadium is overpriced and of extremely poor quality.
- Expensive. Poor service. Limited range of food especially for vegetarians.
- Expensive. Slow service. Limited choice.
- The key problem is standard and speed of service, if you want a drink or pie at half time you have to waste the whole interval queuing rather than having a chat with friends which is a key part of the match day experience. Yet again a plea for vending machines, leave the counter for alcohol and hot food only.
- Pricey and fairly average. Although you don't necessarily expect anything decent to eat at a football ground, it would make a nice surprise.
- I no longer buy anything from the concourse catering since it does not benefit the club. I'd buy tea and sometimes snacks there were that not the case.
- Poor range, high prices, poor quality.

- I HAVE HAD FOOD THERE ONCE IT WAS POOR QUALITY, VERY SMALL PORTIONS AND EXPENSIVE. ON THAT DAY THE CLUB HAD ABOUT 6 GUESTS RON ATKINSON AND OTHER EX PLAYERS. THEY CAME IN AFTER ME AND WERE NOT TREATED ANY BETTER.
- Expensive - usually overheated or even burnt - limited range of veggie stuff (although better than most football clubs) - it stocks Nestlé, which ought to be boycotted - not enough healthy options, especially for kids.
- Sometimes only one van available for food. Also prices very steep for families and pensioners.
- Too expensive. I take my own food drink etc. with me.
- Most prices seem high.
- 1) Poor choice and quality. 2) Expensive. 3) Disinterested/rude staff. 4) One serving hatch open/ queues at half time. 5) Untrained staff who can't add up!
- Why don't they prepare beer etc. prior to half time break?
- The food and drinks are not very appetising, and the prices asked are nothing less than ridiculous.

D. Catering revenues

We asked supporters whether they were aware that many catering revenues did not benefit the club financially, and whether this affected their decision whether to use the facilities.

Almost everyone was aware of the financial arrangements.

Seventy-six percent said that if the profits were shared with the club they would be more likely to use the catering facilities. The other 24 percent said either that it made no difference to their decision, or that they were not sure it was relevant.

8.	Are you aware that the club does not benefit financially from many of the current catering arrangements?	Number	Percent
	Yes	79	93
	No	6	7
		85	100

9.	If the catering profits were shared with the club, would this make you more or less likely to use the facilities?	Number	Percent
	More likely	65	76
	Less likely	0	0
	Not sure	5	6
	Makes no difference	15	18
		85	100

Further comments received:

- Please can stadium company help to ensure that the club is made much more part of the scenery on match day? If it does then stadco will financially benefit. More supporters will buy food and drink if this feeling of remoteness is dissipated.
- Only more likely if the price was right and the food served was good quality.
- It is imperative for the long term financial security and progression of the club that it OWNS ALL THESE FACILITIES WITHIN THE STADIUM. In these circumstances most supporters I know would spend far more time and money in them!!
- Can someone please clean the TV screen in South Upper Stand concourse (next to Oxford Mail Stand) which has had coffee stains on it for 2 years? I know you can't do this but I needed to get it off my chest!!!

- Club catering is poor. Far too expensive and little decent choice, especially if you are vegetarian. Concourse area is uncomfortable. Less smoky now, but still I'd rather stay in my seat than go down there at half time. Queues are too long, no space to move, little provision for actually putting anything down, let alone sitting down. Even R&D can manage a decent seating area (although after last night, I hesitate even to mention that club). As OUFC gets no revenue from the inside catering, I just don't bother. Outside the ground - I used to go to Bailey's van at the fence end after EVERY game. Since the disgraceful way he was treated at the beginning of this season, I have boycotted the replacement vans, as have others. I have also heard bad reports from those people who have used the new vans. Even when Bailey was there, the prices were controlled by Stadco as they insisted he match the prices inside the ground so that the concourse caterers didn't lose business to a cheaper alternative outside. Rant over.
- During the last two or three years more and more people take their own drinks and food. Why pay £1 for a mars bar that you can buy for 45p on the way to the game etc?
- My timetable of going to watch Oxford United has changed since the move from the Manor - I now have lunch and a drink around home or in town, and arrive at the ground usually about 10 to 3 and leave straight afterwards. This is partly because there is little in the way of 'community' pubs and cafes around the ground in the way Headington has. I do think that something that felt less 'plasticity', even if it's not directly associated with the club, would encourage myself and other supporters to arrive earlier, and have lunch and a drink there before the game, and help generate more of a feeling of 'congregation' around the club again.
- As a lounge season ticket holder we use the bar in the Quadrant every match day. Service is generally slow and the cost of drinks is exceptionally high. We would definitely use the facility more if we knew the profits would benefit the club.
- The catering would have to be a lot better (see above), as well as profits going to the club, before I would use it!
- Use east end of conf centre for pub type service - tables & chairs, TV, simple food and full bar.
- The fact that the club don't benefit directly is wrong. The club don't benefit from improved performance. The club negotiated a rent excluding those rights in return for a lower rent I assume. If the club were to offer the Stadco more money for the right than Lindleys do then I am sure the Stadco would accept that. Then the club would be able to show it can run them better than Lindleys.
- Back to the point about high ticket prices (to watch such poor quality football). One can't have both - high catering prices and high ticket prices. It wouldn't matter who benefited from the resulting profits.
- Quality of the food still needs to increase they should send them to Kidderminster.
- I'm surprised you haven't asked anything about pre-match meals served in the Quadrangle. I'm one of the very small group of people that eats them regularly.
- It would be nice to have real ale available somewhere within the stadium complex.
- At Merthyr on Saturday it cost 80p for a coke and a pack of crisps. At OUFC it is probably double that. RIP OFF!
- I would consider using the catering facilities if the club were benefiting from sales but that would also be on the proviso that reasonable value for money products in a better environment were provided.
- The thing that puts me off more than anything is slow service. Football food is exactly that, we know what to expect (apart from Kidderminster) and what to pay.
- As a smoker I tend not to enter the concourse areas until just before the match. Surely there is something the club could do (fenced off area perhaps?) for the many smokers that attend matches. I am also less likely to use the other facilities pre-match due to the same constraints. I am more likely to go to the Priory, where good food, drink and smoker friendly areas are readily available, that coupled with a big screen to watch the live football makes it a far more attractive option.
- Over priced, poor product selection, poor quality, staffed by agency staff on minimum wage...its not the recipe for success is it!
- Catering MUST be improved.
- Where the profits go is less of an issue than the quality of product and service, if these were improved the spend per customer would certainly increase. I'd buy two beers at half time if there was time to do so.
- Generally poor value for money at the moment. I miss the Osler Road double cheeseburgers!!
- THEY WOULD HAVE TO IMPROVE QUALITY THOUGH. I WILL BE BRINGING MY FAMILY TO THE GAME ON THE 29/12/07 AND I INTEND TO EAT IN THE CHINESE OR BENNY AND FRANKY. ALTHOUGH I WOULD LIKE TO EAT IN THE CONCOURSE I WOULD BE SCARED TO IN CASE THE QUALITY WAS THE SAME AS THE TIME I HAD A MEAL THERE BEFORE.
- I find it inexcusable that arrangements were not made for OUFC to benefit from all amenities around the stadium and think this will ultimately be the downfall of the club!
- Needs our own caterers, or profit % to the club.
- The whole catering experience at the Kassam is appalling. The club refuse to accept any criticisms and as long as that remains, nothing will change. Have you noticed the money being

taken at the outside catering burger bars? Supporters are p***ed off and voting with their feet.

- The stadium company's treatment of the owners of the burger van which used to be situated in the car park adjacent to the south west corner of the ground was nothing short of disgraceful. To terminate their catering contract, giving them less than a week's notice before the season started, reflects very badly both on the club and stadium company, as many people would not necessarily differentiate between the two.
- I would support OUFC 100% but will not use any catering as long as Kassam is in charge.
- Mmmm, donuts...