



OXVOX

THE OXFORD UNITED SUPPORTERS' TRUST

OxVox Performance Report – Presented at the 17th OxVox AGM

Saturday 30th March 2019, The Kassam Stadium

1. Introduction

This report summarises the key activities of OxVox, the Oxford United Supporters Trust, for the financial year 1st October 2017 to 30th September 2018. The report also covers activities the Trust has undertaken since the end of the financial year to date.

2. Background – the last year

The principles of the Trust, as described in previous years, remain unchanged. In brief, these include:

- working as an independent voice for Trust members and all supporters of Oxford United;
- building a good working relationship and dialogue with other fans' groups, OUFC, Firoka, the Community Trust, and other relevant key stakeholders and influencers such as the City and County Councils;
- initiating and assisting with community projects to benefit both club and community;
- building a strong and multi-skilled committee; working for sustainability and security for OUFC for the future;
- maintaining transparency and feedback to our members and all fans via social media, email etc.;
- maintaining appropriate external links with Supporters Direct and other Trusts
- developing opportunities for supporter representation within OUFC and the maximising of members' skills for the benefit of our football club.

3. Your OxVox Committee

The committee as at the date of this AGM consists of:

- Paul Peros. **Interim Chair**
- Matt Cavill. **Merchandising and Retail**
- Maurice Earp. **Membership Secretary**
- Wes Harrison. **Stadium Research**
- Simon Hathaway. **Yellow Army and Social Media**

- Trevor Lambert. **Secretary and Treasurer**
- Michael North. **Yellow Army Link**
- Dave Thornton. **O UFC Safety Group and TVP Police Liaison**
- Ali Wolfe. **Social Media**
- Jemma Hayward. **Communication and Fan link** (co-opted member)

Colin Barson became Chair in May 2018 following the last AGM, succeeding Jem Faulkner, with Paul Peros as Vice Chair. Colin stood down as Chair and from the committee in December 2018 and Paul assumed the role on Interim Chair.

The Committee has worked hard to maintain continuity of the Trust's operation, and indeed to expand it, during the numerous committee changes in the last year. We have welcomed 4 new members (Paul, Wes, Simon, and Dave), Jem and Simon Bradbury (Chair and Vice Chair respectively, each with massive experience) have left, and Colin subsequently left in December last year following a short period as chair and several years' experience on the Committee. We are sure all members will thank these three for their contributions to OxVox.

This year, prior to the AGM, Matt Cavill and Michael North stood down as the longest serving members, meaning that three posts were made available for election following Colin's resignation. Matt and Michael stood again for election and no further nominations were received. Accordingly there was no requirement this year for members to vote in an election, and Matt and Michael are duly re-appointed to the Board of OxVox.

The committee at their next meeting will confirm appointments and roles for the coming year in the usual way.

4. Membership

Trust membership continues to grow and at the time of writing, March 24 2019, stands at 1053.

For information, membership growth over the last few years is detailed below.

	Feb 2013	Feb 2014	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	April 2018	March 2019
Adult/Life	325	405	375	469	770	884	918
Junior	125	124	115	113	130	120	135
Total	450	529	490	582	900	1004	1053

We have again maintained the adult membership fee for 3 years at £10, to ensure that the cost of joining does not significantly deter anyone from signing up to the Trust. We would like to encourage all members to suggest Trust membership to their family and friends, and to point out that joining is a simple online activity taking just a few minutes on the Trust website. Fans can also join at our stall in the stadium bar on selected match days.

In recent months the committee has encouraged growth in the number of life members of the Trust, via a new Reward Scheme and attractive associated life upgrade options. Membership renewal and life upgrade options have been added to the OxVox website via a dedicated 'Renew' page to ease the process. The number of life members has risen to

302. Life membership helps us administratively and avoids members being asked repeatedly for renewal subscriptions.

Our thanks to all our members for their support.

Although OxVox has a high membership total given the size of support for OUFC, there is scope for further growth and the committee will be looking at ways of encouraging even more fans to join.

5. Member Communication

We have redoubled our efforts to communicate regularly with OxVox members and to all supporters. We do so via

- **Emails** to members from updates@oxvox.org.uk : members are sent minutes of each committee meeting; announcements; details of discussions with OUFC etc. Nowadays, we rarely get complaints that emails are not arriving, and we believe that the measures we have taken to make delivery more robust have been successful. Please tell us if this is not the case!
- **The Trust website** www.oxvox.org.uk : This contains news items; a document archive including all minutes and the Trust's constitution and aims; a facility to join online or upgrade membership online; an email enquiry facility; and details of the Reward Scheme for life members.
- **Twitter account** @Join_OxVox : which has 3309 followers.
- **Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/oxvoxsupporterstrust/> : which has 577 members.
- **Members' meetings** : Since 1 October 2017 two members' meetings have been held: on 10 January 2018 including invited guests Niall McWilliams and Dan Harris of OUFC, Ian Hudspeth (Leader, Oxfordshire County Council), and Bob Price (then Leader, Oxford City Council); and on 21 November 2018 when the invited guests were Zaki Nuseibah and Niall McWilliams of OUFC, and Jon Rycroft (Oxford University Sports Ground Maintenance).
- **Match day stalls** at the ground: These are now held every few home matches and publicised in advance. They are an opportunity to talk to Committee members about any issues.

6. Finance

The Trust's accounts for the financial year to 30 September 2018 are presented at this meeting and will appear on the Trust website.

Income during the financial year was **£2,544** with an expenditure of **£3,269**, resulting in an operating **overspend of £715**. The committee are satisfied with the Trust's financial performance and the annual accounts are now available for inspection by members. Cash at bank was **£12,711** at the year end.

The overspend in the year was largely attributable to a planned expenditure of £1,691 on equipment for the new **Sensory Room** at the stadium, to provide a match day facility for children and young people on the autistic spectrum, and their parents, family members and carers. We are delighted to support this facility and we hope that members agree with

the committee that this has been a good use of funds despite the short term impact on Trust finances. Two smaller sponsorships donations were made, to Kidlington Youth FC (£250) and the Les Robinson golf day (£50).

7. Communication with the Club

This report covers a period of change for both OxVox and OUFC. Sumrith Thanakarnjanasuth (Tiger) was formally announced as the new owner of OUFC on 26 February 2018. Jem Faulkner left as OxVox Chair in June 2018 to be succeeded by Colin Barson and in turn by Paul Peros at the end of December 2018. Relationships have had to be built and rebuilt. Many meetings have been held with Tiger, Zaki Nuseibah, Niall McWilliams, Michael Doyle from the stadium company, and others to discuss important issues both short and long term.

OUFC has clearly experienced a number of difficulties both on and off the field in the current season. Though dialogue has been strained at times, we believe that all parties have striven to maintain productive and professional contact throughout. This augurs well for the future of the club and we hope that a period of stability leading to progress will ensue. We continue to encourage the club to reveal to supporters the details of its medium and long term plans. Tiger's infectious enthusiasm, coupled with Zaki and Niall's diligence, we believe offer the club tremendous opportunities to progress.

8. Activity Summary

There are a number of specific projects and activities which the Trust has been involved with in the last year: this is a brief summary.

a) Completed projects

- Renewal of the **Right To Bid / Asset of Community Value** nomination for the Kassam Stadium for a further five years to summer 2023. Having been the first to obtain an ACV listing for a football stadium, we were consequently the first to require renewal of the listing after its initial five year period expired. Our work on the renewal culminated in it being approved last summer.
- Funding and project support for the **Sensory Room** : OxVox has funded the equipment to provide this important match day facility for children, young people and their carers.
- Involvement in the **Oxford Food Bank collection day** : which was successful in raising over £1,000 and receiving a huge quantity of food donations.
- Involvement with **125th anniversary walk and presentation** at the Britannia Arms : which installed a framed commemorative picture of the founding of OUFC in the main bar of the pub.
- Involvement in the **Safety Advisory Group** and police liaison : which ensures the Trust has representation on this important committee.
- **Opposition to the OxTales database** : an idea now dropped largely as a result of supporter and Trust opposition.
- Supporting the **OxRails** project : resulting in an initial rail being installed in the East Stand.
- Assessment of the **state of the Priory pub** : an inspection resulting in the conclusion that extensive work would be required to restore the Priory to a usable condition.

- Support for the **Ultras** : the group is now unfortunately disbanded: we offered our support during the issues around flags and allocation of a specific area.

b) Activities in progress

- Setting up the **Reward Scheme** for life members : this is now up and running and work continues to add to the benefits offered to members.
- Planning the **East Stand Mural** – planning of design and funding options (about which more detail later in this meeting).
- Progressing the **Blue Plaque** nomination for the Britannia Arms.

9. Looking ahead

There are a number of priorities for the coming year that we intend to pursue that we feel are vital to the strength, sustainability and enjoyment of our club, but we are also interested to hear from our members as to their priorities and any other issues they wish to see addressed.

Here are a few thoughts.

Stadium: A vital issue is the long term plan for the club's location, whether at a new stadium or a redevelopment and upgrade of the current ground. Our involvement will build on existing relationships with the club and with local councils. Firoz Kassam has an important role. We have not yet achieved a good relationship with and we will seek to do so.

Representation: Our interest remains in some form of formal supporter representation on the board of OUFC. This could involve a shareholding.

Membership: We continue to encourage more fans to join the trust, not simply to increase numbers, but to add to the membership's skill base and breadth of views. We will seek ways of tapping into both.

Community: We'll continue to look for Community projects to be involved with, in conjunction with the Community Trust.

Match day: Let's try to identify aspects of match day which could be improved and bring proposals to the club and stadium company. These could include stewarding issues, car parking and transport, catering, policing, disabled facilities, and traffic management.

Meetings: Further members' meetings with relevant speakers will be organised.

Ticketing: Our input into ticketing and pricing discussions will continue.

Please tell us your concerns so that we can bring them to the club and any other relevant stakeholders.

Thank you for your continued support.

COYY'S!