

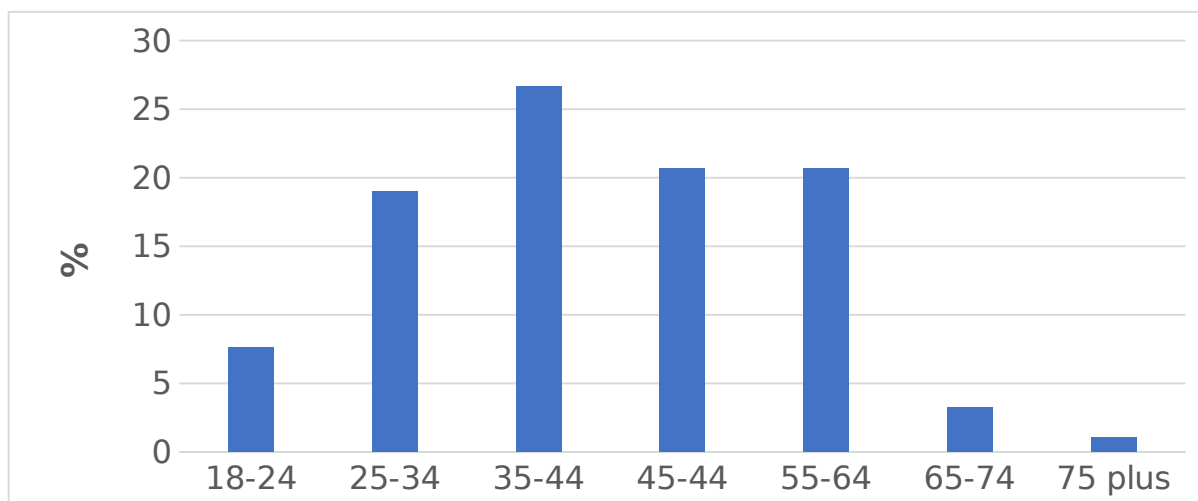
Cardiff Arms Park Survey: Preliminary Results

What's the Survey About?

CF10 is providing a truly independent voice for supporters of Cardiff rugby. Given all the media talk about the redevelopment of our beloved Cardiff Arms Park, one of the first things to do was to seek the views of those who actually pay to pass through its hallowed gates-the fans themselves. We therefore opened an on-line survey in September in order to allow people to express their thoughts. Though this will remain open-we're keen for as many people to complete it as possible-we thought that it would be timely to report the views of those who have completed it so far. This brief report aims to do just that.

Who has responded so far?

One hundred and eighty people have completed the survey to date. Ninety per cent of those were men-so we need more women to express an opinion to make sure that we've captured a broad spectrum of opinion. The age distribution of respondents is as below:



Though older fans were under-represented, this suggests a reasonably accurate sampling of the demographic of our normal crowd.

Just over 37% held Cardiff Blues Season Memberships, 35% Cardiff Blues and Cardiff Athletic Club; around 26% had neither. Sixty-three per cent attended

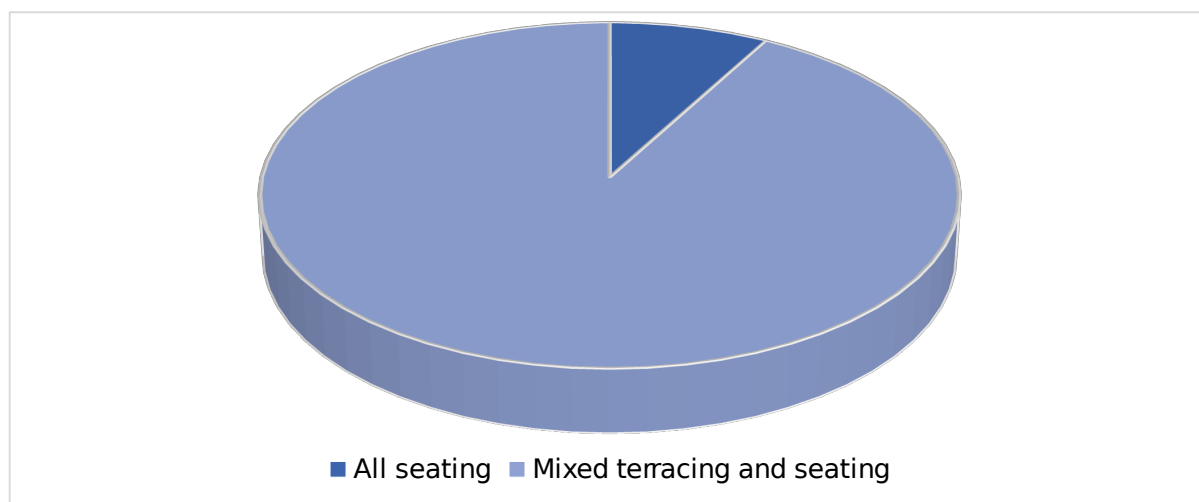
Cardiff blues matches only, almost 33% both Cardiff Blues and RFC games, and under 2% RFC games only. Over 48% attended more than 13 games last season, 33% 7-12 matches and 19% 0-6 games. This would appear to suggest that we captured a representative spread of both hard core and more casual attendees. The majority (over 80%) were not members of the Cardiff Blues or Cardiff RFC Supporter clubs.

What have people said?

We asked people to respond to a series of structure questions and also provided them with free space to write about what was important to them.

Structured Questions

When asked what they enjoyed about visiting the Arms Park at present, nearly 88% said its city location, 80% being part of a great rugby tradition, 72% the intimacy of the venue and 52% the opportunity to meet friends. Peoples' view on the design of the new ground was absolutely clear, with almost 92% advocating for the retention of terracing.



The responses to some other key 'wish list' features from 'state of the art stadiums' that we asked about are shown in the following table:



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Feature	% responding 'Good idea' or 'Definitely'
Being able to order food/drink and have it delivered to your seat	24%
Using an app to know how long the queue at the nearest toilet is	21%
Being notified of seat upgrades when you enter the ground	29%
Being informed of player statistics during the game	52%
Improved Digital Screens	90%

Over 90% were in favour of there being a Cardiff Rugby heritage centre as a central part of the new ground redevelopment. Nearly 99% wanted this to include Cardiff RFC memorabilia, 97% Cardiff Blues memorabilia, 84% videos of great Cardiff matches, 68% interactive displays, around 40% access to experienced guides and audio guides, and 77% a souvenir shop. Twenty-five per cent indicated that they would visit such a centre once a year, 37% twice a year, 29% three to four times a year and 10% more than four times a year. Over 85% indicated that they would also take friends and family along. These data suggest that a heritage centre would have good income generating potential and act as a key resource for the community.

Unstructured Questions

Of the 185 respondents so far, 139 have left additional comments. While these are broad ranging, they centre around certain key themes.

Atmosphere

“Design an intimate rugby venue (not a bland, soulless football style ground).”

Having terracing at the new stadium was the single most mentioned point in the comments. Many associated having terracing, and it being close to the pitch, with a good atmosphere. Concerns were also raised about the size of the ground.

“A new ground should try to keep the intimacy that the arms park has by being close to the pitch, with what appears to be a narrow pitch/ small in goal area.”

“The arms park is tired and out dated I support the re-development but do not lose what the arms park has and that is intimacy and atmosphere”



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"Terraces are a MUST. If we have learned anything from modern stadiums, it is that all seaters take a lot of character away from rugby grounds. Try taking away the Shed from Kingsholm."

"It is obvious that those grounds that still have terraces also have atmosphere. Parc-y-Scarlets, Rodney Parade both have a good atmosphere because they have terraces. Liberty stadium doesn't have any atmosphere and Leckwith didn't either."

"The arms park is tired and out dated I support the re-development but do not lose what the arms park has and that is intimacy and atmosphere"

"How are we going to build - not take away from - the atmosphere on match day? What lessons can be learned from the liberty and PYS in that regard?"

"Can the stadium be designed so that it keeps the atmosphere contained/enhanced, and not become a soulless, bland arena?"

"Avoid any redesign that closes the ground off to the skyline. The generic bowl design for other stadia in Wales has killed the atmosphere and robbed fans of a unique experience. Fans enjoy being able to see and feel that they are watching rugby in the City Centre."

"Seating/terrace needs to have the correct rake, and not to have a flat, 'dead', path between the stands and the pitch (like the Stoop). Need to try and keep hold of the current atmosphere and feel of the ground. It's been brilliant so far this year."

"Whatever happens, keep the terraces!"

"Can you please ensure that standing terraces are part of any redevelopment plans for the rugby ground."

"Please do not remove the terraces, it's one of the things that makes a rugby stadium great!"

"We absolutely must have a terrace section in the new stadium"

"Terraces are essential and can be a selling point. A new stadium with the largest terrace in the uk would provide wow factor without costing much."

"I enjoy watching my rugby from the terrace and have watched Cardiff and Cardiff blues from there for nearly 30 years. Do you intend to keep a terrace"



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along the touchline in the new stadium?"

Scale

Many felt that if it were too big, a half empty stadium would have no atmosphere:

"The move to the Cardiff City stadium was the perfect example of what the stadium shouldn't be. If the plan is to increase the capacity of the stadium, a solid plan has to be in place in order to cement new fans. Having 3000 fans in a 20,000 stadium is a terrible experience for both fans and players."

"Keep the terraces. Make the leg room in the stands bigger. Don't increase capacity too much, we struggle to fill cap at present and games where we get to 10,000 supporters are rare, making it too large would make it soulless - we don't want or need another city stadium fiasco."

"How often do we get more than 10000 fans at a match without introducing concessions? I believe a smaller capacity ground (10-12000) actually increases ticket sales as it creates a demand especially on big occasions. Fans buy early or fear missing out altogether. It also vastly improves atmosphere which I believe players and fans feed off."

"What is the main objective of the redevelopment? We are not filling the Arms Park at the moment, and I don't want to watch rugby in a half-empty ground. Increasing the capacity must be accompanied by measures to increase attendance, for example, lower ticket prices, and attractions that relate to rugby. More shops and hotels will not necessarily attract more supporters on a Friday night. The redevelopment must build the club ethos, and the appeal of the Blues. For me, the key at the moment is building the attendance. Nothing beats a packed Arms Park, and people will come again and again if we can fill the place."

The balance between seating and terracing

There was concern that any terracing might be a token section:

"Some of the questions in the above survey seem to lean heavily towards a suggestion that CAP could become an all-seated venue as part of any future development. I am absolutely against this - many of us use the north side terrace and enjoy doing so. This must be retained IMHO, and retained substantially as it is, not some token terrace area as part of a redevelopment of the north terrace. The comparison to ""American Stadia"" is disingenuous at



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best and probably very foolish at worst."

"Terracing is an absolute must. And not just the token amount like at parc y scarlets. Rugby grounds with terracing generate great atmosphere."

"Make it so you know it is a Rugby Ground, not a soccer one. Standing room for fans, a large in-goal area, stewards that treat you like human beings. Easy and quick exit from the Stands - the time it took to leave Leckwith was far too long."

Heritage

Many thought the new stadium must keep the heritage of Cardiff rugby:

"I think it's vital that the heritage of the club/the ground is maintained. While anyone who attends CAP as it is right now can't deny that the ground does need to be redeveloped, it would be a real shame if it lost the sense of history that comes with it."

"This is the most iconic club rugby ground in the world. Please ensure that the re-development & the running of the club generally reflects this heritage"

"I would hope any redevelopment would capture the history and the essence of Cardiff."

"I think it's vital that the heritage of the club/the ground is maintained. While anyone who attends CAP as it is right now can't deny that the ground does need to be redeveloped, it would be a real shame if it lost the sense of history that comes with it."

"Why is the branding of the club so mixed up and why don't they want to use the heritage, tradition and history of the club as a selling point? We were known throughout the world as being the best, the elite, other clubs and their fans were jealous of us, but now look how far we have fallen."

"Push the continuity between the current Blues brand and the glorious heritage of the Blue and Blacks. We seem to be almost prepared to sacrifice our glorious past to win favour with anti Cardiff elements in the Region."

"Gloucester seem to have done it well. They promote the history of the club and you feel more part of something"



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“Keep the heritage. Celebrate our successes past and present.”

Consultation

Many called for supporters to be consulted over the plans:

“Please talk to the supporters about the plans as they develop. We'd like to feel part of the crucial decisions being made about the club we love.”

“How will you interact with supporters on the Design and development of the stadium and not rely solely on architects”

“More a request, please consult supporters”

“Can we supporters be kept informed.”

“I'm positive about the proposal. I also hope that we take fans views into account about where we play while the ground is redeveloped.”

“Please consult us, the fans”

“How much consultation with supporters and events industry will be done before the final planning application is submitted?”

“Can us fans have a say?”

“Listen to your supporters when designing/re-designing the ground.”

“Make sure the supporters are consulted and listened to”

“How will there be engagement with supporters.”

“Supporters are not one homogenous group, so how do you categorise those various supporters and how will you make sure their views are captured throughout the planning and design process.”

“What have you got planned, and how will the fans' voice be heard. How do I get involved?!”

“Will members / season ticket holders have an input into the design of the ground”



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Catering

Many would like better quality food and drink to be available:

"Better quality food and more staff in the bars (thus reducing queues)."

"Plenty of drink and food stalls with good quality goods"

"Better choice of food and drink; family zones to make a day of the experience; better shop facilities; indoor bar area for season ticket holders / members club."

"I already go to most blues home games, but I would like to see better food and drink outlets with better Service, and smarter surroundings to make it a more appealing place."

"Better choice of food and drinks i.e. coffees pies, pasties and pastries compatible prices to outside the ground Pop up Type shops"

"A range of food and drink options rather than the old fashioned ones we have now."

Invite street food vendors in, change to different ones every few weeks."

"Higher quality bars & food outlets (something better than a sploot market burger & bottle stall for a start) - why not ask Cardiff streetfood market to do a day at cap in the interim?"

The Loss of the Gareth Edwards Lounge:

Some bemoaned losing the upstairs lounge in clubhouse:

"Access to a proper clubhouse which celebrates the whole history of the club, as the old clubhouse did upstairs."

"For me, we lack the large socialising space that the upstairs clubhouse used to provide."

Terracing is a must for rugby, even if only on one side of the ground."

Pricing

A potential increase in ticket prices was clearly a concern for some:



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“Despite being excited about the proposed redevelopment of the arms park, how will the stadium redevelopment impact on the ticket prices at Cardiff blues?”

“Will this development significantly affect the cost of tickets which could result in restricting access to some?”

“With the heavy investment the redevelopment will likely take...how will this impact ticket/merchandise/food prices, more particularly to season memberships?”

Facilities for people with disabilities

While this should be a given, several respondents flagged up important concerns:

“Disabled access. It is an opportunity to have an excellent facility that welcomes our disabled fans and families. Take a leaf out of Manchester United’s disabled access policy”

“good disabled facilities should be part of the redevelopment”

Questions for the Cardiff Blues Board

A lot of the “questions to the board” concerned how long the redevelopment would take and where would we play in the interim:

“The future development is an exciting time. What will be the plans for the temporary home. Will you consider a survey of the fans on the details of the temporary home whilst the development is under way?”

“How long would the proposed development take to complete and where would the team play during this time?”

“My big question would be, where do we play during redevelopment ?”

“Will we be offered similar positioned seats in a new stadium? During the rebuilding where will we play”

Kick Off Times



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The subject of KO times came up, whilst these maybe out of Cardiff Blues' hands, it's clearly an issue. These are some of the comments in response to the question "Other than a winning team, what would encourage you to attend Cardiff Arms Park more often?":

"Standardised kick off times"

"Settled kick off times"

"Sensible timed matches."

"Better game times"

"More regular kick off times, back to back games with the rfc team - the pitch can take it, just sort out the schedules."

"Saturday afternoon kick offs"

"Better and more consistent ko times. To encourage more families, which obviously equals more revenue the region, the evening ko times don't really suit. Perhaps at least once a month there should be an afternoon ko which could be heavily marketed towards families. Also, more should be done to include schools within the regions"

"More family friendly kick off times and better areas to eat drink and socialise"

"Sensible kick off times. Saturday afternoons or Friday nights"

Stewarding

A few people commented on the standard of stewarding:

"A number of the newer stewards could do with a crash course in positive customer management training. The ground has a much less welcoming feel about it than most other grounds"

"Some of the stewarding at the Arms Park on Blues days was along the "jobs worth" line"



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General Comments

There were also a number of general comments that reinforced many of the points above:

“Pleasant warm furnished entertainment /bar area. Top class restaurant with Cardiff rugby theme. Museum. Scoreboards that do not break down all the time and loudspeaker announcements /score updates that are audible and intelligible. Clean toilets.”

“Must be a fantastic rugby ground first - commercial spin offs are necessary, but shouldn’t be the main focus”

“The terrace at PYS is too small and too flat. I've been to several English grounds over the years following Cardiff in Europe, they have real beer on sale (just a few barrels) but it sells well, usually gone by the end of the game. Other clubs do better food, hog roasts, decent burgers (not cheap rubbish), Racing served hot plated food in a big tent. I know we have to compete with city centre food and beer outlets so its hard to do too much, several members grumbling that a pint costs £3.50 in the clubhouse but £2.00 in the gatekeeper across the road.”

"I'll always attend because I'm CRC to my core. I swap shifts to make all home games, and so I can't really attend any more often than I do. That said, I do want CAP and CRC to try and understand that just because there are some of us who might not put as much money into the club because we're not as affluent as some, that doesn't mean our views, or our own idea of what the "match day experience" is about, should be ignored. Ultimately this is about rugby, *our* rugby, in our community. Every time our team run out, they are *our* boys, and we support them through the highs and the lows. It's about rugby, not business networking opportunities, or flash apps that bring us beer to our seats (at a cost, no doubt), or pointless comparisons to American football teams that on a population-based comparison alone, we could never hope to match. Our ground, our rugby, our boys, our Cardiff communities :)"

“Better shop and clubhouse facilities. Build more of heritage of Cardiff rugby into the ground. Branded drink cups.”

The other two things that were mentioned a number of times were toilets and PA. But people were really complaining about the current stadium. We have to assume these would be significantly improved in a new stadium.



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Conclusions

The current survey represents a snap shot of supporter views. It can be criticised on the basis of its small present sample size of 185 people-but that is 185 more fan opinions than have been collected to date by anyone else! If the Cardiff Blues want to make the survey more representative, they can easily do so by emailing and circulating via social media the link to the survey page (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/CAP-Survey>) to those on its databases. We invite and welcome them to do so.

Despite these reservations, a number of key themes have emerged at this early stage:

- People were generally very supportive of the redevelopment
- A massive majority stressed the need to retain terraces
- Capitalising on the heritage of Cardiff rugby needs to be a central feature of the new ground
- The ground must be a rugby ground first, additional functions such as concert venue and conference facility being secondary to this aim
- The scale must be appropriate to the fan base
- The new ground must be accessible to all
- The ground must include good indoor facilities for supporters to socialize
- Fans want to be consulted in a meaningful way about the redevelopment.

As stated, the survey will remain open and these findings will be updated on a regular basis as the sample size increases.