UNITED SERVICES CLUB (MACHEN)

Customer Survey Report

2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE

General Information

This report is based upon the results of a survey, carried out via the Club's website at https://uscmachen.random3d.co.uk and does not include information relating to those suggestions supplied manually via the "Suggestion Box" on the club bar.

Publicity

The Survey was publicised via the club's Facebook page, as well as the Home Page of the Website, itself.

Period of the Survey

This report covers the period from when the survey went "live" on the Website (24 April 2024) until two weeks later (7 May 2024), by which time voting had diminished, then ceased.

Survey Format

The survey consisted of two parts.

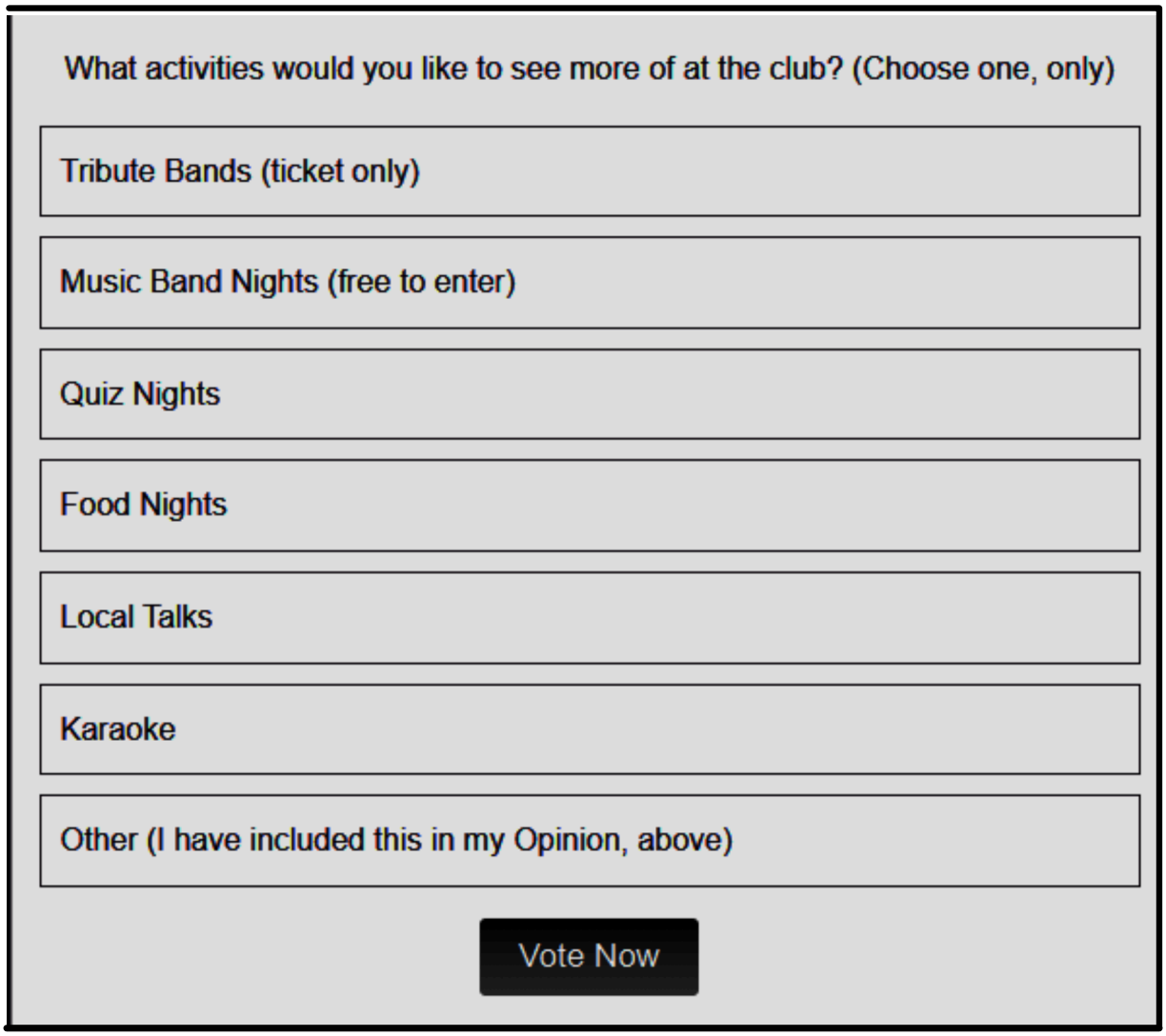
1. A freeform section, where customers were requested to give their first name (for identification) and then complete two text boxes ("What Do You Think The Club Does Well?" and "What Do You Think the Club Could Do Better?"

On pressing a button marked "Send Opinion", the information in this section was sent as an e-mail to the website manager, for review, collation and inclusion in this report.

2. A multiple choice type question asking "What Activities Would You Like To See More Of At The Club?" and requiring but a single choice.

This information was collated via a hidden database on the site, and customers completing this part of the survey could briefly see the total results of this part of the survey, to date.

The next page details the choices that were available.



Overview of the Results

In the period specified (24 April - 7 May 2024, inclusive):

Total visits to the Website *: 2,274 visits

Completion of Part 1 (e-mails received): 78

Completion of Part 2 (multiple choice): 78

A Summary of the results can be found on page 6.

* May include multiple visits by the same people on different days.

What The Club Does Well

A selection of comments made by respondents.

“Live Entertainment”, “Great bands/Band nights”, “Music events” (and many, many others on this same theme)

“Providing high quality musical entertainment and a welcoming, friendly environment for people to meet new people.” “Provides lots of Social Events, support local community and groups.” “Bring people together. Makes people Welcome”

“Clean and friendly with good entertainment.”

“Advertising Events”, “Beer prices”

“It supports local groups such as facilitating the Machen Agricultural Show committee meetings and fund raising events, a local craft and crochet club and a social group for Welsh learners and speakers. The club really welcomes Welsh speakers by displaying the ‘iaith gwaith’ orange speech bubble on its doors and literature. Welsh speaking staff wear the badge too to encourage customers to converse with them in Welsh. The Welsh ‘Clwb Clebran,’ meet for a social event once a month and I find this really makes me feel welcome in the club.”

“It holds many functions that brings the community together.It allows many community groups to use the premises often at no charge. The knitting ladies are there, and Machen Agricultural Show hold meetings every month and also various social functions, all at little or no cost.”

“Music nights are amazing, also as being part of a few local committees, the school and sports clubs, this club supports in the most amazing way by offering the hall free of charge or at a smaller fee. I love how this club is always sparkling clean and no sticky floors!!”

“As someone who attends Machen Show meetings and events, I think that the Club is a great host and really looks after community groups like us. Everyone is extremely friendly and always tries their best to ensure that we are accorded every facility we need for a great evening.”

“Particularly welcoming for new people to help them integrate into the village.” “Friendly place…” “Community Hub”

What The Club Does Well

“The new "Clwb clebran" welcomes Welsh learners and speakers monthly for an hour, offering opportunities to socialise and to further develop language skills.”

“Entertainment and Open Mic nights.”

“The live bands are really good, bar staff are excellent.”

“Base to meet a company for pensioners.” (sic)

“Live music, events, organising social groups such as Machen show meetings etc, great bar staff, volunteers willing to help out.”

“Very good artists on the open mic nights, very friendly staff, you never feel alone when you visit the club, very friendly atmosphere and very friendly crowd.”

Summary

As expected, everyone has their personal favourites and so the “likes” cover a wide variety of areas.

However, the club as a venue for live music seems to be the most common, with the opportunity to socialise and meet people running a close second and supporting local community organisations third.

What It Could Do Better

Disabled Access

One respondent commented that disabled access to the Club was great, generally, but three mentioned the lack of disabled toilets as an area that could do with improvement.

Additional Events

Live Sport. Something more for younger people. Something for young families in the daytime on a weekend. Perhaps try some smaller events in bar on other nights (Solo and duo singers, comedy, bingo?) .

More interactive things such card and game nights. Skittles and card nights.

Upgraded Facilities

Chairs/tables/boiler. More beer choices/Guinness on Draught.

Other Suggestions

Liaise with external agencies such as Menter iaith to raise the profile of the "clwb clebran" to attract more speakers and learners.

More publicly (sic). Same bands appear over and over again. More events.

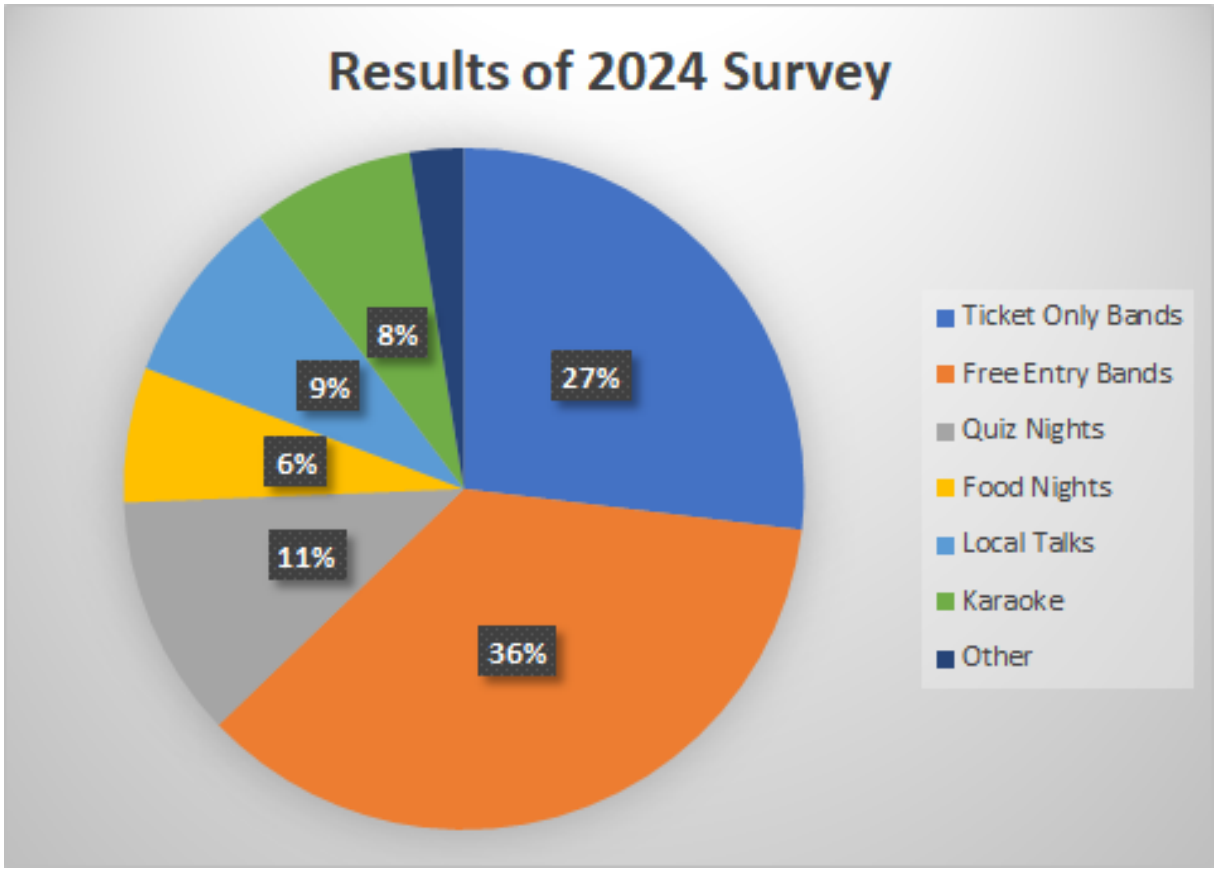
Better bar décor. More music and food options. More people (?). More dancing. Help bar staff know who next (?) Happy Hour.

Better surface on car park better plus drainage walking in. Outside wall by stream needs TLC (a mural?). Rain drainage on path. Make outside more attractive.

Nothing to Add

30 respondents chose “Nothing to Add” under this category.

Results of the Multiple Choice



Results are shown as a percentage of votes cast.

Live music is the most desired event, with almost 2/3 of the overall votes, and “free entry” band nights clearly being the most popular.

Ticket only bands:	27%
Free entry bands:	36%
Quiz Nights:	11%
Food Nights:	06%
Local talks:	09%
Karaoke:	08%
Other:	03%
TOTAL	**100%**

Report Summary and Views

First, to explain, the following commentary is made as a personal observation of a largely independent nature. I have no role in the day to day running of the club, do not live in the area, and have not even visited the club. I do organise much of their publicity and IT issues and so have a limited knowledge of their activities.

Good things about the Club

It is obvious from the comments that the club is seen as providing a valuable community resource, mainly as a centre for live music and social gathering, but also supporting other local groups in their endeavours - the Machen Show, the Knitting Group, the Local History Society, amongst many others.

Suggestions for improvement

I have to preface this by saying that I am aware that the club is run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis, as a service to the local community.

That said, I will address the broad suggestions with my limited knowledge of the Club's activities.

1. Improved Facilities

Improving the facilities costs money. The Disabled Toilet is, I know, an already identified priority but has an estimated cost of £15K, well beyond the club's resources. I know a recent grant application to assist with this was unsuccessful, but the club is still pursuing funding.

Similarly, I know the Club is actively seeking to improve infrastructure, principally the club's ancient boiler - but all this has to be balanced against available financial resources and outside assistance in the form of grants and donations.

Applying for grants is difficult, time consuming and has to be fitted in to the lives of the volunteers in addition to the time spent operating the club, itself.

Live Sport - the Pool team are attempting to raise £1,500 for a projector and Screen, but a crowdfunding attempt has only achieved just over 20% of that target. Again grant support may be available, but not guaranteed.

These are trying times for small enterprises, such as USC Machen.

Report Summary and Views

2. Additional/Extended Opening hours and events

It must be recognised that there is a difference between the club and what happens there.

The club arranges live music on a fortnightly basis, and also is heavily involved in the corresponding Open Mic nights, in the intervening weeks.

However, many of the activities at the club are organised by persons not connected with the club, or in a personal capacity and not as a member of the club committee.

Many of the suggestions in this category would relate to using the club as a venue (and not something the club would, itself, organise) or would require the club to extend its opening hours - thereby asking the volunteers to commit even more time and raising running costs. This is particularly the case in the “more of X” suggestions.

These suggestions would probably be more viable if there were more volunteers prepared to get involved and help organise the events, and if the events were (at least partially) self-funding.

One comment referred to the “same bands” appearing over and over again. Between 23 March and 26 July, 2024, there are 11 scheduled “Band Nights”. These feature 11 different bands - not one repeat in 3 months. Looking at the 3 quarters from 1 April to 31 December, there is only 1 repeat in 22 music nights.My belief is that this comment is not an issue that needs to be addressed, by the club, at this time.

3. Other Suggestions

Additional drinks menu comments have been passed on to the club, for consideration. The number of minor “one-off” comments have also been listed (on page 5) and passed to the Club.

With regard to liaison with Menter Iaith, the club acts as a venue for Clwb Clebran, not as an organiser - I have requested the comment be passed on to the Clwb Clebran organisers.

Andrew Yeo

7 May 2024