

Comment for planning application 24/00539/F

Application Number	24/00539/F
Location	Land To The East Of Stratfield Brake And West Of Oxford Parkway Railway Station Oxford Road Kidlington
Proposal	Erection of a stadium (Use Class F2) with flexible commercial and community facilities and uses including for conferences, exhibitions, education, and other events, club shop, public restaurant, bar, health and wellbeing facility/clinic, and gym (Use Class E/Sui Generis), hotel (Use Class C1), external concourse/fan-zone, car and cycle parking, access and highway works, utilities, public realm, landscaping and all associated and ancillary works and structures
Case Officer	Laura Bell
Organisation Name	Joe Nicholls
Address	27 Sir Frank Williams Avenue ,Didcot ,Oxfordshire ,OX11 6AS
Type of Comment	Support
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>Good evening.</p> <p>Oxford United is a special football club. It has made a huge difference to my life personally, but many of my family, friends and colleagues too. I support people with disabilities and mental health issues, something I have my own personal experience of. The difference Oxford United makes to their lives cannot be overstated. There is often frustration and disappointment when results don't go our way, but the banter and the joy that supporting Oxford United brings, is very special. The current stadium is difficult to get to for those that are unable to drive, and it means that people that would love to go more are unable to. The stadium itself has poor facilities. No warm water in the toilet taps. Poorly maintained areas that supporters use, and a disabled area that isn't ideal and is limited due to space.</p> <p>I recently did some travel training with a gentleman that has followed Oxford United for 40 years, as was too anxious to go back to matches after covid. The first time we traveled on the bus together to the stadium, his excitement levels were clear to see. As we walked to the stadium and he saw it person for the first time In 3 years, the smile and look of joy is something I will never forget. It reminded me just how much our football club means to people in our community. Unfortunately, the gentleman has stopped coming to matches again as he finds it difficult to get the bus that takes so long, with a 10 minute walk from Blackbird Leys that follows. This isn't an isolated case. I speak regularly to people who find it difficult to get to the ground. This means they become more isolated and lonely. It breaks my heart as I know the difference it makes when they come to watch Oxford United. They feel part of a community that cares and is together. That is the power of Oxford United Football Club. A new stadium with the travel links and facilities proposed would make a huge difference to peoples lives. It would open a world of possibilities and opportunities for those currently restricted by issues faced with the current stadium. When I talk to some of our fans that are affected, the hope that a new stadium that is easily accessible to all could happen is real, and it is giving them something to look forward to. There would be so many more people currently facing loneliness and travel issues the chance to regularly be part of our community. A community that could come together 7 days a week if this does go ahead.</p> <p>Personally, I struggle with anxiety and find the current stadium very unwelcoming and it can become overwhelming when simple things like warm water in toilet taps, or filthy toilets that are poorly maintained which sometimes means I avoid going and that leads to additional issues. I am so excited by the prospect of a community stadium that caters for the needs of our fanbase. It would make such a difference to me. I find the drive quite difficult if it's busy. I would get the train to every game from Didcot if this happens. The amount of stress the new stadium would relieve for me is indescribable.</p> <p>I have 2 wonderful children. 2 boys that are only here because I met their mother through Oxford United. They are 13 and 7, and love Oxford United. Sadly I don't live with them any more. Time with them is precious, so when we get to go to watch Oxford United together, it is special. My dad first took me 34 years ago, so for me to take my children now, it's a huge honour. Unfortunately due to anxiety I am not always able to take them. We go in the family</p>

stand, but the toilets available are used by the rest of the stand. It gets too busy in there for my youngest, and it's unhygienic due to poor maintenance from the stadium company. The facilities near the ground aren't great for them or are you busy. We have to go early so I can get a parking space of my anxiety levels shoot up. The 3 of us have discussed the potential new stadium, and we are all really excited it could happen. A much easier way of getting there, better facilities, and a stadium that will cater for all. This really would be life changing for my sons and I.

I have been involved on and off on the fan scene at Oxford United for a few years. I am able to be myself where I struggle in other situations. I feel valued, part of a community. I speak to a variety of fans each week, and as I do in my job at work, I really want to help people and make a difference. The frustrations caused by the issues with the current stadium means it's a barrier for many to attend regularly, or at all. The wellbeing and happiness of so many people would increase if we were to move to a new stadium.

If our football club is moving into a new area, we will make sure as a fanbase that we respect the local people and do our best to enhance their lives and show we are an amazing community of people brought together by our football club. We can make a difference and show our appreciation for an incredible opportunity our club and fanbase. I hope the stadium is an asset to the local community and can help bring us together.

Oxford United are a special part of peoples lives. I support this stadium proposal so the fans of Oxford United, and the residents of Kidlington and surrounding areas can have facilities that will help add value and change peoples lives for generations to come.

Thank you for taking the time to read my views.

Joe

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21/04/2024 21:06:30

Attachments