

Food Committee Minutes

7th March 2019

Chair Ian (Head of Catering)

Minutes Benedict (Junior Steward)

Present Ian (Head of Catering), Danielle (Catering), Emily (TCSU President), Benedict (Junior Steward), Puria (Environmental & Domestic), Angie (Ents), Pooneh (BA Catering)

Apologies Sarah (Head of Bar), Isabel (BA)

Earlier bar opening in Easter

- Last year, the bar was very successfully opened at 7.30, to allow students who have 9.00 exams to grab some breakfast. Benedict will collate the days when there are a lot of exams and send them to Sarah.

Environmental labelling of food

- ‘Foodsteps’ are working with the University Catering Services and several other colleges to implement environmental labelling of food. The system uses the recipes to statistically analyse how environmentally friendly the food is.
- Ian and Puria will set up a meeting with UCS about the specifics of the labelling scheme.

Meat-free days in the servery

- This is not a good idea. It went down very badly at Churchill.

TCSU May Week Garden Party food

- TCSU organises a garden party in May Week. This year, however, its budget will need to be cut by about £200.
- Angie and Ian will have a meeting about food for the party. They will need think creatively the food, and more generally about how the party is sold to students.
- Summer staff party has a magician, traditional garden games, etc. Would probably be able to lend garden games to TCSU: it has more of a summer fair feel. Although it may sound naff, the atmosphere is great.

Formals

- There has been some miscommunication about alcohol in food: there shouldn’t be alcohol in student food for religious reasons.

- Tuesday Formals have never filled up. Giving students more guest tickets was suggested as a way of selling more tickets; this is very unlikely, however, due to College subsidies.

Themed formals

- Doing themed formals for Easter term is generally discouraged, as fewer people turn up to them.
- A Welfare Formal (a normal Formal, but with the Tutorial staff invited) will be discussed with Welfare Team.
- One theme idea was “menu from the past”: pick a century, and do a menu based around food from that period. This could be paired with a “food from the future” theme in the same term, most likely Michaelmas.
- Decoration in Hall at formals might be possible, but only with the approval of Council.

Outdoor seating

- There will be benches and tables underneath the cloisters during Easter term.
- Ian will speak to Senior Tutor regarding snacks in the cloisters.
- Benches and chairs will also be there during the Summer, when the BAs are still in College.

Servery closing times

- Statistics from the tills show that very few people eat after 19.00, mainly members of the Choir. Closing at 19.00 is operationally easier, as that is the time when Catering transforms from ‘servery mode’ into ‘dining mode’. It was noted that the current closing times were agreed last term: TCSU feedback asked for consistency.
- Ian will send the Food Committee the statistics regarding how many people eat after 19.00.
- There have been some complaints about students getting kicked out of hall while staff are setting up for dinners in the evening. This should not happen, and is a staffing issue. Sometimes, however, students will eat deliberately slowly as a ‘joke’.

Vegan food

- There are not very many vegans in College: only 15/282 respondents to the food survey explicitly said they were vegan, although of course there are not only 15 vegans in College.

- The Daily Special is intended to be a “Tesco value meal” to cater for students with limited means, as well as being vegan.
- It would be hard to have more variety in vegan food, for cost reasons. There is a binary choice between the Daily Special being a “value meal” and it being a vegan meal of similar quality to the meat offering.
- The vegetarian option will be labelled as vegan when appropriate from the start of Easter, when the new allergen labelling system is rolled out.
- Catering are intending to introduce a proper salad bar, allowing vegans to build their own meal.

Healthier, lighter food

- Some concerns were raised by respondents to the food survey about the healthiness and lightness of the food.
- It is almost impossible to please everybody; however, having a really good salad bar will go some way to solve the problem.

Food in the bar

- There were a number of comments in the TCSU survey about the food in the bar, mostly negative; 70% of respondents wanted more variety.
- The sandwich order changes every week according to demand. The bar make any more paninis due to having maxed out on power.
- Everything has to be manufactured outside of the bar, as there isn’t space to make it onsite.

‘Superhall’

- ‘Superhall’ – an undergraduate feast, with the same format as the BA feasts – would be doable for £25 per person.
- There could well be a ‘Superhall’ at the start of Easter term; otherwise, it would be in Michaelmas.

Brunch

- There was a request from a student to have the chocolate sauce placed with the waffles at brunch.
- Other Colleges (e.g., Pembroke) have more choice of sauces for pancakes.

- Catering recognises the need to reinvigorate brunch, so it is the best brunch in Cambridge again. Will tour around other Colleges and see which ones do good brunch.

Kitchen tours

- Ian is willing to give a tour of the kitchen to TCSU Executive.

Cooking classes

- Catering will put on cooking classes for BAs outside of term time.