

Welcome to BE04  
The Bedford BID Newsletter  
The Shape of Things to Come!



## It's happening

Your investment in the Bedford BID is now working. The number of customers visiting Bedford Town Centre are up by 4,000 a week on the same period last year.\*

Businesses are faring well against national trends which show retail sales falling. Those who have benefited the most are those who have actively taken advantage of the promotional activities and seized the attention of those extra customers who are hitting the streets.

The launch and arrival of the Bluecaps on September 23rd and 24th was covered by every possible local news media - BBC TV, Anglia TV, Chiltern Radio, BBC Radio 3 Counties, Times & Citizen, Beds on Sunday, local websites and glossy magazines like Beds County Life. Bedford BID paid for advertising on your behalf in local Press, local radio and the buses. We were shouting loud and clear on your behalf.

One retailer who recognises the benefit to his business is Neil Primett of Planet Clothing in The Arcade who reported that "something special was happening in Bedford" on the launch day and in September in general.

"We are staggered by the size of year on year increases. Our men's store achieved increased clothing sales of 43% in September against 2004.

A well informed team of Planet staff spread the word on what we believe was a historic day for the town and highlighted our BID launch offers. The upshot of such enthusiasm and even greater customer interaction saw our men's store achieve a turnover increase two and half times the same trading Saturday in 2004 and ladies sales doubled the previous year.

Our Hitchin store traded on par with 2004 - highlighting how something very special was happening in Bedford."

See back page for details of high profile marketing campaign for Christmas 2005.

\*115,000 per week compared to 111,000 last year at Silver Street/Midland Road intersection - figures from professional auditors Footfall retained by the Bedford Town Centre Company.



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## Bluecaps putting Bedford on the map

Giving out maps and pointing people in the right direction to shops has proved to be one of the main tasks of the Bluecaps since they arrived in Bedford in a blaze of publicity.

As well as "meeting and greeting" the Bluecaps have proved useful as the "eyes and ears" of the Bedford BID. They have added to the feeling of security for shoppers, dealing with 1,000 enquiries a week and have been carrying out other tasks such as:

- logging graffiti and reporting it so action can be taken
- 200 visits to businesses and shops
- liaising with police, cleansing department and car parking
- handing out 200+ promotional leaflets and 100 Retail radiolink leaflets
- distributing flyers for Beer Festival, Wallace and Gromit and Close Encounters



Call Free on  
0800 013 0339

## BID busy bees needed

Are you making the most of the Bedford BID?

Did you put up posters on the launch days of the Bedford BID?

Are you thinking about how you can make the most of the Christmas campaign?

If you haven't time why not appoint someone in your business as the Bedford BID "busy bee" contact - someone who can get to know the Bluecaps and use them to your advantage, someone who can read this newsletter and respond to our request for information. It could be a training and promotion opportunity for a member of staff with an interest in marketing.



## 1,000 reasons to shop in Bedford

The winner of the Bedford BID launch promotion prize was Margaret Grove of Kempston who won £1000 worth of shopping vouchers. The photo shows her receiving her prize at Allen Sturgess Travel in Bedford.

Our two new Police Community Support Officers who are part of the Bedfordshire Police Force devoted to keeping our streets safe - but working directly with Bedford BID.

Money comes to money - and we have won £15,000 of Arts and Business match funding cash to help provide live entertainment in Lime Street. Slightly off the beaten track Lime Street and its exclusive independent shops need a boost. Details to be announced.

You too can benefit from Bedford BID pounds if you are planning a new venture in the town. One of the aims of the levy is to help new independent shops open up and blossom - and they needn't be from outside. If your business could branch out with something that will help make Bedford a more interesting place to visit let us know. Remember - it's your money too.

Tune into Bedford BID's media partner 96.9 Chiltern FM to keep up to date with all the latest news from Bedford and the Bedford BID. In addition to commercials every day on the airwaves, the local station is running a series of special promotions in the lead up to Christmas to encourage people to shop here. If your musical tastes are older then try Chiltern Classic Gold on 79.2AM.

Remember also to read the Times & Citizen and Bedfordshire on Sunday, and other local magazines and websites, for more details in print.



## On your doorstep

BID member Bedford College is helping and benefiting from the boost in Bedford's profile and economy.

If you are thinking sales - remember Bedford College in its riverside location is just a two minutes from the Town Centre.

Chief Executive Ian Pryce says: "In our college 16-18 year old student numbers rose by over 100 last year. We know that most go into town during the day this would have added perhaps 500 to the weekly footfall count.

Even better news for the town is that this year's numbers have risen by over 300 (21% increase!) which could add another 1500 to next year's count.

About 50 organisations offer our students discounts of 10-20% on services like restaurants, clubs, bookshops, stationers etc and students really appreciate this.

We also have over 12,000 students aged 19+ in any year and in any year about 10% of Bedfordians will enrol at the college, so we are a huge potential market for local business."



## Safer Business in Bedford

Bedford Town Centre has won a prestigious national award as a safe place to do business. Presented to the Bedford BID, the Safer Business Award is organised by the British Retail Consortium and the Home Office.

It is a standard to which all towns and cities strive and recognises good practice and a partnership approach in deterring business crime and anti social behaviour.

The Bedford Town Centre Retail Radiolink Scheme with over 100 active business members, is now available to all 500+ Bedford BID businesses and was especially singled out for praise.

Bedford BID is also working with Bed:Safe on the Challenge 21 radio and beer mat promotion.



## A First - Bedford Park & Ride

Bedford BID welcomed the first Park & Ride facility which began life on 1st November in time for the important Christmas trading period.

Situated off the A6 at Elstow, you can park in the spacious car park, fully covered by CCTV and with a waiting room and toilets. With buses up to every 10mins and a return journey into the town centre costing only £1.30 make sure your staff and customers know.

For more information call 01234 343152

## Customer Service Training

Book early to benefit from FREE training being offered by the Bedford BID to levy-payers to help increase their trade.

A pilot seminar with just 20 places will be staged showing people how to make the most of the Bedford BID benefits and practical customer service training from a seasoned professional.

Places are available for businesses and office staff as well as retailers.

Contact the Bedford BID office and speak to Chris Barker to book your place asap.

## A wonderful Christmas in Bedford

This Christmas will see the first comprehensive marketing campaign for Bedford Town Centre. Organised by the Bedford BID it will target not only the local population but further afield including parts of Milton Keynes.

Under the general banner of a 'Wonderful Christmas in Bedford' look out for:

- Christmas shopping ads every single day from mid November on Chiltern 96.9FM and Classic Gold 79.2 AM supported by Black Thunder and other promotions.
- 1/2 page ads in the Times & Citizen and Bedfordshire on Sunday, and their Christmas supplements.
- 80,000 leaflets to be posted out to places such as Biggleswade, Sandy, Dunstable and parts of Milton Keynes featuring all the popular present items as well as something a little different from our independent shops.
- The 'Festival of Fire and Light' Switch on event on 23 November 2005. Our Charter, Gourmet Food and Flower Markets will be complemented by a programme of fun and exciting street entertainment.
- The arrival of Santa in the Harpur Centre on Saturday 26 November 2005.
- 20,000 leaflets for Victorian Fair (9-11 Dec) being distributed in Bedford Borough carrying information on late night shopping, parking and other Christmas activities.
- A school competition 'Absolutely Crackers' which will ask 10,000 children to produce crackers and other Christmas items to be displayed in selected shops in the Town Centre.
- Requesting as many businesses as possible to offer a gift wrap service.
- Discounted car parking in the multi storey car parks on Fridays. FREE parking on Sundays in December and the car parks open longer for late night shopping.
- The launch of the new Bedford Park & Ride service in Elstow. A return journey costs only £1.30. Tell your staff and customers.
- And of course our Bluecaps will be on hand to help you and provide information.

Make sure your business takes advantage of the many promotions and activities organised by Bedford BID.

Seasonal activities and entertainment for all the family

Special offers in many stores

Meet Father Christmas in his grotto at the Harpur Centre from 26 November

Victorian Fayre 9-11 December recreates the spirit of Christmas past

Late night shopping on Wednesdays from 30th November - car parks and most stores open till 9pm

FREE parking on Sundays throughout December

Bedford Park and Ride (Elstow) runs every 10-15 minutes throughout the day

Free gift wrapping service in Harpur Centre from 19 December\*

Helpful Bluecaps to give you directions and advice

\* £1 suggested donation (Bedford BID Charity)

Bedford has everything you need! Come around to our town this Christmas.

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Bedford  
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