



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses
www.lovebedford.co.uk



*An independent voice for
Bedford Businesses*

**Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) AGM
15th November 2012**

Dear BedfordBID Levy Payer

During 2011/ 12 progress was made in the reshaping of BedfordBID to meet the changing needs of levy payers. This was led by our voting Board of levy payers who make all the key decisions for fellow businesses. We believe we are now on a stronger financial footing and have a more powerful voice in supporting our levy payers.

We have a more robust financial system to ensure levy collections are transferred quickly to BedfordBID which manages those funds on your behalf. Although the money is collected by Bedford Borough Council as our appointed agents, the money comes to us.

We have redirected the BID team to ensure it is concentrating on the activities you wanted, as well new services to add value and create real money savings for members. As part of that process we appointed a new Director of Operations on a lower salary than the previous Executive Director. Christina Rowe is employed directly by the BID. The role of Bluecaps has been extended to engage more closely with businesses.

We are working for your benefit with the council. For instance, changes in the way applications for street vending are approved, means that BedfordBID is now consulted by the council so we can talk to rate paying businesses before temporary stalls appear. And remember in this coffee/cafe society, more and more businesses are benefiting from the reduction in the cost of café seating licences from £3,800 to £305 a year which was a BID win.

The roadworks at St Mary's this time last year proved to be one of the most challenging times for our town centre. BedfordBID helped to combat the damage to businesses and spoke up for them in the pre-Christmas free parking issue which some demanded as compensation. This crisis helped to clarify the difference in roles and responsibilities between BedfordBID and the council - eg BID is not responsible for setting car park tariffs. But we came to the aid of the town centre by financing the FREE after 3 pm promotion where we paid the council out of BID funds.

Throughout the Love Bedford brand has been used to push out a more positive message for the town as a whole and will continue to be promoted. This is now being recognised widely and only recently our Love Bedford vouchers were heralded on BBC Breakfast TV.

Among key initiatives for 2012/13 is the launch of the new FREE Town Centre Guide App. This and other activities we hope will enhance the visitor experience and help establish an exceptional customer service reputation for the town.

Board members give up their time, without any financial compensation, to help our town. Join them and help yourselves by learning to Love Bedford.



Kevin Kavanagh
Chair of
BedfordBID Board



The BedfordBID company continues to strengthen its performance with the projects and services it provides to its levy payers:

Bedford outperforms the UK national vacancy rate, 10.6% vs. 11.2%.
Survey Date: April 2012; source: Springboard



Footfall - during July Bedford was 4.3% up on the same month in the previous year, compared to -4.1% in the East of England, and -7.3% in the UK. In September - footfall in the UK's High Streets decreased by 0.4% compared to the same month last year. Bedford performed strongly with an increase of +4.5% year on year and +7% month on month.
Source: Springboard footflow system



Love Bedford town centre voucher scheme - over 240 businesses are now on the voucher-scheme. To date a total of £562,970 worth of vouchers have been sold over the course of the scheme. Bedford College alone has purchased over £397,000. Current redemption is over 90%.



Love Bedford Reward Card - The database has now swelled to over 1,473 members receiving regular monthly emails of the town's instant rewards.

Small Business Rates - BedfordBID has successfully assisted claims relief and back payments to a value of £36,787 in the past few months. More businesses have been identified and BedfordBID will be supporting further claims.



Utilitrack - To date 108 visits have been carried out. 87 businesses have requested a follow-up and diary note made of when contract needs renewing. Examples of savings already made equate to £357 p.a. (BID levy £255 p.a.) and £478 p.a. (BID levy £350 p.a.). The majority of BID members have been found to be/will be in contracts and with their permission, have been logged for future action. With the regular contact Utilitrack and the Bluecaps are having with the BID businesses, it is anticipated that a potential of an average of 5/6 business a week should be benefiting from this service and making savings this time next year.

Crime is down in Bedford Town Centre - Using data from the Bedford Borough Community Partnership Community Tactical Action Group (CTAG) of criminal offences recorded in retail locations, overall the first quarter of 2012 saw a 23% year-on-year reduction. Source: Bedfordshire Police



www.lovebedford.co.uk - year on year the BedfordBID Love Bedford website visits have grown by over 47%. Followers on Twitter and Friends/Likes on Facebook, continue to grow every month.



BedfordBID Exclusion Order Scheme - over 70% of retail businesses in town are now on this scheme, however businesses need to use the Retail RadioLink initiative to ensure ongoing success.



Incidents of Anti Social Behaviour in Bedford Town Centre have increased by 27% from the previous year. Source: Bedfordshire Police. The number of cyclists reported in the pedestrianised town has also risen dramatically. BedfordBID is working directly with Bedfordshire Police who have organised a cycling initiative at the end of October and a pre-Christmas crime reduction campaign at the end of November.



Graffiti - Graffiti management is primarily a Bluecap duty. This was down to an all time low in July with just one incident reported.



Talking to town customers, working with partners

Research : April 2012, BedfordBID commissioned research amongst lapsed and non users of the town. The results will be used to shape future initiatives to encourage visitors back to the town. They will involve the promotion of its heritage and historical background, our beautiful riverside and will address a number of concerns, particularly in respect of the apparent run down environment, the perception of safety, parking issues and the lack of choice/variety of shops. Our survey showed specific parking issues tend to focus on perceived lack of availability of spaces and high charges.

As a consequence of these concerns among those questioned, visitation frequency has fallen recently, with over a quarter of respondents visiting less often and almost one in ten no longer visiting at all.

Portas Pilot : In May, BedfordBID led on the application and a Bedford Town Team was created. As a result over £50,000 was awarded to the town. The principles are about working together and 'piloting' initiatives to build a better Bedford which can then be copied elsewhere. One such initiative includes working with the team and a local artist, to dress one of the prominent vacant units in the High Street in time for Christmas. It has been recognised that many of the items on the "wish lists" of other Portas towns are already being made possible in Bedford by the BID.

Lobbyist : BedfordBID represents the interests of business on a variety of organisations - making sure the voice of business is heard.

In Lime Street, the BID intervened when businesses complained that street lights had not been fixed. They have now. When the possibility of a £3 million injection of cash for the High Street was suggested - real business funding was needed to secure the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). We pledged £100,000 on condition we saw how it was spent.

Helping to keep the town safe: BedfordBID introduced and runs one of the largest Retail Radiolink schemes in the country. Retail Radiolink and Exclusion Order Scheme is a well established partnership between stores and businesses sharing up to the minute information between Bluecaps, police and CCTV. We are linked together in a bid to stop shoplifting, business crime and disruption to business - and to make sure the town is safe for your customers.

BedfordBID sponsors the Taxi Marshall scheme at night. We pay £15,000 a year to the council to run the scheme. The marshalls wear our Love Bedford brand.

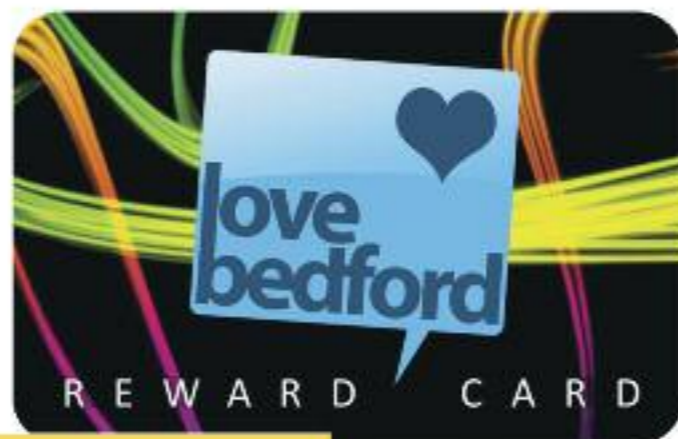
Christina Rowe
Operations Director BedfordBID

What you said you wanted and more.

A snap shot so far :

APRIL

Relaunch of Town Centre Loyalty scheme. Membership increased to over 1,470 contacts who now receive monthly updates of INSTANT offers from a variety of town centre businesses.



MAY

Bluecaps refocused to liaise directly with businesses to improve communication and liaison between businesses and Bedford BID on promotions, services and projects such as the Love Bedford Gift Voucher scheme designed to help boost the local economy. £500,000 sold to date.



JULY

A month long opportunity for independents to spring board on the back of the national campaign supported by on site publicity, radio and press promoting the wide variety of independent businesses in town.

JUNE

Love Bedford's most popular annual food festival got bigger and better involving more businesses and attracting new customers. A multi media campaign for the month of June promoted this sector.

SEPTEMBER

In response to businesses requests, Bedford BID arranged with Bedfordshire Police for a dedicated PC in town throughout the month of September to deal with ASB/street drinking.



OCTOBER

Following the increase in the number of cyclists reported in pedestrianised areas of town, Bedfordshire Police committed extensive resources in town to educate cyclists followed by enforcement the following month. Distribution of parking guide around town centre.



AUGUST

Coupon booklet of town centre offers handed out to the thousands of visitors to the River Festival to entice them back during the month of August.

Giraffe Safari - fun for all the family. High brand exposure for participating businesses strategically placed around the town and outstanding community involvement with Bedford schools. Significant media coverage generated.



DECEMBER

A Very Bedford Christmas - distribution of 120,000 postcards by Bluecaps promoting local shopping and late night opening. BoS Christmas brochure - multi media advertising campaign including 65k distribution of Christmas magazine. Christmas in the Squares event in town and launch of late nights.





Q : Is your business on the correct fuel tariff?

BedfordBID has teamed up with Utilitrack to provide a 'One Stop Shop' to help levy-paying businesses check their current energy and telecoms/broadband tariffs against the market's best buys. Call on 01234 267883 for further details.

Q : Want to use social media to promote your business?

Caroline Wise is offering to come along and help you set up a business Facebook or Twitter account and get it going. Caroline has done the same for several town businesses already. Once you are established on social media it is free. Contact Caroline to talk about your business needs on 07841 343 325 or visit her at www.wisesocialmedia.co.uk.



Q : How can our town centre businesses help each other?



Helping each other is one key benefit of the BedfordBID - so here goes with a super offer from Cartridge Depot at 30 St Loyes Street. 5% off printer supplies and free delivery for BedfordBID members. And if you take along an empty cartridge you will be saving the environment and helping owner Guy Ciampa to collect money for charity. The business opened in March and within weeks had collected 250 for recycling, the target is 6,000 by the end of the year.



Q : Want to know more about how to get your rates reduced?

Contact BedfordBID for advice - we have already helped businesses save thousands of pounds.

Q : How to keep customers coming back?

Love Bedford Vouchers are designed to boost the local economy, the more we all spend within our area, the stronger our economy will grow. Nearly 250 businesses now participate. If you run a business and want to join the scheme call BedfordBID on 01234 404500

Love Bedford Town Centre Gift vouchers are also available for rewarding, incentivising or simply as a gift for your staff. Major companies should contact us for more information. Please tell your local business contacts/suppliers

Love Bedford Reward Card - Nearly 1,500 signed up customers receive regular updates on instant monthly rewards. Submit your offers for the card by emailing info@lovebedford.co.uk

Love Bedford Town Centre Guide App. To promote your offers on this fantastic new facility contact chris@lovebedford.co.uk

Love Bedford Website www.lovebedford.co.uk FREE website database pages for all businesses and opportunities to feature special offers. Send your details to nicky@lovebedford.co.uk



Q : Where is the best place to park?

Ask the Bluecaps for a copy of the parking fact sheet showing the best rates.

BedfordSmart Phone App Launched

A free Love Bedford App to help people find places to shop, eat and drink, seek entertainment and business services has been launched by BedfordBID. The App has been launched in time for the critical Christmas season. Already it has proven useful for one user, Woodfines Solicitors: "Being listed allows people easy access to our details so they can reach us at any time. We hope it is a great success," said Partner Sylvia Goulding.

Social media enthusiast Nicola Adcock, Marketing at Woodfines said she has already used the App to direct her parents to places to go in Bedford: "It was so easy to find out when the Christmas lights were being switched on." Samantha Laycock Manager of the Harpur Shopping Centre said she was introducing the App to more than 30 stores so they could post special offers on-line to potential customers. Christina Rowe, Director of BedfordBID said: "The App is a free and easy to use piece of technology which supports and amplifies all of our other marketing and promotional activities. The website www.lovebedford.co.uk can be accessed together with details of our Reward Card and Love Bedford vouchers.

"All of this marketing and promotion of Bedford Town Centre benefits not only those who pay the BID levy but hundreds of other smaller and neighbouring businesses. We Love Bedford and we are encouraging customers far and wide to do the same this Christmas."



Mission: Excellent Customer Service

The mission of BedfordBID, backed by MP Richard Fuller, is to make Bedford a town know for its excellent customer service. To that end BedfordBID sponsored the Customer Service category in the wide-reaching Rising Stars Business Awards. Chair Kevin Kavanagh attended

the event and presented the prizes. He said: "The BedfordBID has gone on record as wanting to make our town known for the welcome it extends to visitors who choose to visit Bedford above other towns."



- Free after 6pm**
Duckmill Lane
Melbourne Street
Riverside Square
St Peters St
- Free on Sunday**
Harpur Centre
Duckmill Lane
Melbourne Street
Riverside Square
St Peters St
- Park & Ride**
10m Estow Park
MK42 5XF
Buses every
10-15 minutes
(hourly on Sundays)
- On street parking**
Charges apply
Mon - Sat 8am - 6pm
from 60p for 30 mins
FREE Sunday
- Motorcycle parking**
Free and without time limit in
any council car park and on
street pay and display

	Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Over 4 hrs	Up to 5hrs	Over 5hrs	Opening hours	Sunday
Allhallows* Multi-storey	-	£1.60	£3.00	£3.70	£7.00	-	-	7am-6.30pm	8am - 6pm £1.00
Lurke Street* Multi-storey	£1.10	£1.60	£2.50	£3.30	-	£4.00	£6.20	7am - 8pm	8am - 6pm £1.00
River Street* Multi-storey	£1.10	£1.60	£3.00	£3.70	£7.00	-	-	7am - 8pm	8am - 6pm £1.00
Queen Street* Multi-storey	70p	£1.00	£1.60	£2.30	£3.40	-	-	7am - 8pm	Closed
Duckmill Lane*	Free for a maximum of 2 hours								FREE
St Marys St* corner of Duckmill Lane	-	Max 2 hrs £1.40	-	-	-	-	-	24 hr	FREE
Melbourne St*	-	£1.00	-	£2.40	£3.50	-	-	24 hr	FREE
Riverside Square*	-	Max 2 hrs £1.60	-	-	-	-	-	24 hr	FREE
St Peters St*	-	£1.50	-	£2.80	£5.50	-	-	24 hr	FREE
Harpur Centre Underground	-	£1.60	-	£2.70	£6.00	-	-	8am - 6pm	FREE
Ashburnham Rd*	Daily £6.00		After 10am £3.50						Sat & Sun £2.50
Train Station	Daily £7.50		After 10am £3.00		After 5pm £2.00				
The Broadway	Daily £5.00 / 80p per hour / FREE between 8pm - midnight								
Bedford College	£1.00 after 4pm weekdays				£2 all day Saturday and Sunday				
Park & Ride	6am - 11pm Mon - Sat 10am - 5.15pm Sun £2 adult £1.35 child day return www.bedford.gov.uk for more details								

* council owned car park. Blue Badge Holders park free of charge and without time limit within the council owned car parks.

Love Bedford's Christmas in the Squares



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Meet Father
Christmas and
his reindeer
on 28th
November
from 5pm

Bedford Rock Choir and Bedford Town Band
will add to the festivities, and a reindeer parade
starts at 5pm from Boots Corner. Get your
Christmas shopping underway with late night
shopping until 8pm. For more details visit
www.lovebedford.co.uk or Tel: 01234 404500

