

# Welcome to **BE02**, the BedfordBID Newsletter

## BIDDING FOR SUPPORT AMONG TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES

Businesses are being presented with the opportunity to steer Bedford Town Centre into a successful new future - through a BID (Business Improvement District).

A series of 21 street meetings for businesses in the BID area were staged during July and saw even the most sceptical attendee persuaded about the boost to business which could come through the ideas on offer.

The scheme is being steered by the well-established Bedford Town Centre Company which has already come up with many ideas which have brought business into Bedford. Because of these initiatives, Bedford Town Centre was chosen as 1 of only 22 towns in the UK to pilot the BID, which is based on a hugely successful American idea. In addition the BID for Bedford has been given £30,000 by the East of England Development Agency to help get the message across.

Over 200 organisations have now taken part in face to face or street meetings to look at setting up a BID in Bedford (BedfordBID). Businesses were asked to indicate a total of about 5 priority projects. Mo Aswat of Bedford Town Centre Company said, "This will be about delivering a small number of high quality, quick & visible improvements and not a wish list that takes 5 or 10 years to bring about".

Those businesses attending the street meetings were asked at the end to give an indication of how they would vote on the basis of what they had heard. A huge majority, 90%, said they would vote Yes in the poll in favour of a BedfordBID. The actual vote will take place in early 2005 and if the vote is yes then everybody in the BedfordBID area will have to take part. The other benefit of a Yes vote would be that at least £100,000 will be available from other sources like property owners.

"People have gone away from these meetings with a very positive view of the scheme - even those who had criticised it beforehand," explained Mo Aswat of Bedford Town Centre Company, "Now we want them to talk to their neighbours and business colleagues and vote in favour when the ballot takes place in 2005."

Please turn over for Street Meeting results.

**Bedford  
Town Centre  
Company**

**BE02**



"Having attended the meeting very much as an 'open minded sceptic', I am now in favour of a BID in Bedford. We are a large employer in an office based business and there is a clear need for a high quality environment for staff & visitors. I believe a BID will help make the necessary impact."

Nicolas Davies  
Woodfine Batchelor  
Solicitors



"I was more than somewhat sceptical when I first learned of the Bedford BID's scheme. I attended the initial meeting and I am pleased I did because I think this is a real way forward to improving and revitalising the Bedford Town shopping environment. Get involved, the alternative is to do nothing resulting in nothing happening!"

Michael Peters  
Tavistock Sound & Vision



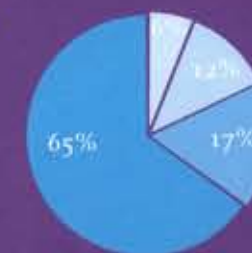
"I didn't realise that if you were already involved in schemes like BedSafe & the radio link, this would be included in a BID and you wouldn't pay twice. I won't be paying any more and the big benefit is that all the pubs & clubs would be part of it instead of the few. I think this can only make our business better and the town centre safer".

Sean O'Donnell  
The Kings Arms



### What Type of Businesses Attended the Street Meetings

Retail: 65%  
Office: 17%  
Food, Drink, Leisure: 12%  
Service: 6%



Those attending the Street Meetings were asked the question "Would you vote for a BedfordBID on the basis of what you have heard".

Yes: 90%  
No: 10%



### Project Priorities - Top 5 Project identified by those attending Street Meetings

Town Centre Rangers (Meet & Greet Customers, Enforcement of Byelaws, Monitoring Services & Facilities) (1)

Car Parking (Free Parking Days, Longer Opening Hours, Sunday Parking) (2)

Marketing & Promotion (Town Centre Guide, Regular Promotional Campaigns) (3)

CCTV (Extra Cameras, 24/7 Staffing) (4)

Radiolink & Exclusion Order Scheme (daytime), Bedsafe & BAND Scheme (night time) (5)



**YOUR IDEAS** are welcomed, contact the BedfordBID team at the Bedford Town Centre Company on 0800 013 0339 (all calls are FREE)

### Supporters of Bedford Town Centre Company



Phone us on 0800 013 0339 The call's free!

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