

BE07 The BedfordBID Newsletter Come Around to Our Town



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In 80 Days and Park&Ride TryMe Tokens

A new look Bedford!

The £200m redevelopment proposal for the regeneration of Bedford's town centre west, including the bus station, has been given the go ahead by Bedford Borough Council.

Councillors voted unanimously in support of the application made by St Modwen Developments Ltd.

The decision means that design works for the 20 acre site can start - creating a vibrant new shopping and leisure experience in the west of the town centre.

It will follow on from the long-awaited Castle Quay development in Castle Lane on the east side.

BedfordBID Executive Director Mo Aswat said: "This is an important period in the future of Bedford and we congratulate the Mayor Frank Branton and Bedford Borough Council for helping to make long awaited plans become a reality."

- Highlights of the west scheme include:
- Shopping (including a department store; 40 retail units)
 - Leisure (including 5/6 restaurants and a cinema complex)
 - Hotel (including up to 130 rooms)
 - Homes (up to 330 units)
 - Car Park (up to 1,100 spaces)
 - New revitalised Bus Station

This decision follows more than 3 years of planning and 2 major exhibitions which revealed overwhelming public support for the area to be regenerated. Work is expected to start in 2009 with the new development completed in 2012.



Cafe Culture boost for Bedford

Cafe Society can flourish now in Bedford - thanks to an agreement between BedfordBID and Bedford Borough Council.

Restaurants and pubs wanting to put tables and chairs on the pavement at La Paris cafe society, found themselves paying dearly for the privilege, up to £3,800 a year.

When the BedfordBID investigated and found that costs were much dearer in Bedford than in neighbouring towns like Cambridge they asked the council to reconsider.

As a result businesses will now pay a new standard charge of only £250 per year for creating a "cafe society".

BedfordBID board member Kevin Kavanagh, who owns Frescoes coffee house in Mill Street, represented this sector in the debate. "We are delighted that the council has decided to let us all continue to take advantage of the sunshine, when we get it, and allow our customers to eat and drink outside."

BedfordBID Executive Director Mo Aswat said: "This demonstrates how the BedfordBID has much more influence than individual businesses when negotiating with official bodies. We are delighted with the result."

"It means that the town will find it easier to retain and attract high quality cafes and restaurants to come and open up offering customers more choice."

BedfordBID is a group of businesses which pay a levy towards the greater good of the town centre economy. Bedford was the first county town in the UK to have a Business Improvement District (BID).



Come Around to Bedford on the Web

As the Bedford Town Centre Website continues to grow... what can we do for you?

Comearoundtobedford.co.uk is now over a year old and continues to grow with regular daily updates. The website was a key factor during the BedfordBID 'Around The World In 80 Days' promotion and featured 85 individual pages dedicated to each of the businesses taking part, with information, special offers and photos.

Come Around to Bedford remains the only website on the Internet that contains information for every business free of charge in Bedford Town Centre in its unique Town Centre Guide. Find what you're looking for quickly and easily by searching the entire town with your fingertips.

Also on the site you will find a comprehensive What's On Guide, all the latest news items and information on big promotions & sales being offered by businesses in the Town Centre. Make sure you pay us a visit and more importantly tell your customers. www.comearoundtobedford.co.uk



BedfordBID Bluecaps go DIGITAL

Businesses in Bedford are benefiting from up to the minute information about shopping trends, customer preferences and promotional opportunities - thanks to the Bluecaps.

The BedfordBID Bluecaps are on the streets every day meeting and greeting visitors, answering questions and giving out information and marketing materials. Now they have the very latest technology to enable all that information to be relayed electronically back to BedfordBID HQ where it can be analysed and shared with levy-paying BID members.

All have Personal Digital Assistants or PDA handsets into which they log or scan vital data. They can use the PDA to take photographs of offending sights such as graffiti or rubbish and relay them back to the office staff who then liaise with the Bedford Borough Council's clean-up teams.

Back at HQ Project Manager Chris Wood says: "It means we can collate and analyse information which can then be used as business information for us and for BID members. It will help us identify trends in shopping behaviour and highlight where, for instance, we have many enquiries from visitors for a product or service."

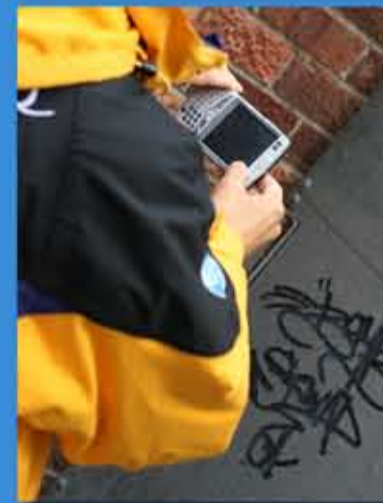
Tackling Graffiti in Bedford Town Centre

Graffiti is a sign of the times. It exists not just in Bedford, or in the UK but in cities across the modern world. The activity of mostly young people, graffiti can take the form of spray paint signs, code names scratched into ironwork and even pre-prepared stickers with individual slogans.

Chris Wood, Project Manager with the BedfordBID has become something of an expert: "BedfordBID decided to take a strategic approach to curing the problem which covers everything from prevention, persuasion and prosecution. Using intelligence about this form of criminal damage and good documentation we hope to at least reduce the impact of graffiti on the environment."

BedfordBID Bluecaps have photographed all old and new graffiti, which is then posted on to database, which police can use as an example of other offences when taggers are caught. "Because a tag is their signature they are effectively signing their own arrest warrant - so when they are prosecuted a whole list of examples can be put before the court. Recently four arrests were made and in one case, an individual had tagged more than 250 times."

Ongoing work is being done with the offenders and with youth artists to try to form an understanding, which may help prevent and deter this behaviour, whilst the Bluecaps continue to log and work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council to start removing the graffiti from the streets.



www.comearoundtobedford.co.uk

Come Around To Our Town. Bedford.

Elaine is up and away to Venice thanks to BedfordBID

The 'Around the World in 80 Days' shopping promotion lifted sales in Bedford Town Centre and fulfilled the dreams of one would-be traveller.

Elaine Lewis aged 78, is a regular shopper in Bedford travelling into town on the bus from her home in Bramham. Widow Elaine took part in the summer-long Around the World in 80 Days promotion run by the BedfordBID and struck lucky out of over 5,000 entries.

Now she and a chum are heading off to Venice for a fantastic holiday; "I am tickled pink it is a lovely opportunity," said Elaine whose good news was welcomed by friends at the Bedford Guildhouse where she takes painting classes. Having lived in Bedford for 30 years Elaine is strong supporter of the town centre and believes the Bluecaps are doing a great job in helping to improve life for shoppers and businesses in Bedford.

The promotion kicked off in July for 13 weeks and boosted business for 85 shops and other outlets with daily prizes which tied a nation or location into a local enterprise. All participating businesses were featured on the BedfordBID website www.comearoundtobedford.co.uk and had their own poster designed free for them by BedfordBID, some of which are shown below.



Right: Elaine with the BedfordBID Bluecaps

Keep your business afloat when disaster strikes

Fire, police and terrorism team head master class for BedfordBID

How to ensure your business survives a major incident was the theme of a seminar staged by BedfordBID on September 11th. The date was a coincidence but served as a timely reminder of how the terrible Twin Towers disaster impacted on businesses well beyond the day.

Closer to home the Buncefield oil disaster in Hertfordshire caused millions of pounds of business losses - not because offices or depots were damaged in the fire but because the area was closed off to all but emergency services for days, weeks and months.

How would your business cope in such circumstances?

Answers were given in the Home Office/Association of Chief Police Officers ARGUS event, one of a series being held in every major UK town and city over the next two years. At Bedford on officer from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office and representatives of Bedfordshire police, fire and ambulance services and Bedford Borough Council shared useful information with business delegates about how they operate in such circumstances and the importance of business continuity planning.

For instance, in the event of an "explosion" the emergency services send first a limited team to assess the situation - to find if the cause is accidental or if other explosions are likely. To those hit by the blast it may seem that 999 service are slow to respond - they are not - and will be close by waiting for a signal to indicate it is clear to move in and help.

It is in these early moments that businesses, shops and offices alike, can do much to save their people and themselves. Rushing to "evacuate" is not always the best solution if your building is not obviously on fire or in danger of collapse. If terrorists are at work there may be other bombs to follow. Stays calm, stay put and stay away from windows are three simple rules to follow until the situation becomes clear. And put your Incident Management Plan into action. Haven't got one? Start now.

A whole range of advice is available from websites such as www.m15.gov.uk and www.blrf.org.uk.



Keep it safe initiative

The BedfordBID Bluecaps and Town Centre PCSO's will soon be busy handing out custom 'Cat Bells' in a Keep It Safe initiative. The idea is that the Bells, attached to a purse, handbag or wallet, will alert it's owner should an attempt at theft be made.

Over the last year a number of handbags and other items have been stolen without the owners knowledge and the Bells offer a cheap and easy deterrent to pick-pockets.



BedfordBID Annual Report 2006/2007

Included with this newsletter are some key performance indicators and a financial summary of the last year of operation of the BedfordBID.

If you would like a copy of the full report contact BedfordBID FREE on 0800 013 0339 or email mo@bedfordtowncentre.co.uk



Go Crackers

with BedfordBID Bluecaps this Christmas!

The Christmas light switch on event held on the Embankment heralds the start of late night shopping in Bedford Town Centre on 21st November 2007.

BedfordBID will be promoting Wednesdays evenings as 'Late Night Shopping' from 28th November. This will continue every Wednesday night until 17th December, when we will be promoting a full week of Late Night Shopping running up until Saturday 22nd December 2007.

Car parking and park & ride operations will be extended at the same time.

Other key dates include the Victorian Foyre from the 7th - 9th December, 2007.

BedfordBID will be running a marketing campaign to promote Christmas including radio, newspaper and flyers along with a full listing of what's going on our website at www.comearoundtobedford.co.uk.

BedfordBID Bluecaps will also be handing out Christmas crackers to shoppers with pizzas and special offers inside! For further information contact BedfordBID on 0800 013 0339

Free retail training

BedfordBID advises businesses of a very special retail training deal available via fellow BID member Bedford College.

The FE College offers hundreds of professional and vocational courses and, thanks to the Government Train to Gain initiative, can offer FREE retail NVQ training to BID members (subject to meeting criteria)

Contact Julia Dos-Santos on 01234 291392 or email jdos-santos@bedford.ac.uk



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