

Frequently Asked Questions which are put to the BedfordBID team

Why doesn't the council do something about empty shops?

The council does not own most of the shops and cannot compel corporate or private landlords to rent or refurbish their properties. However the £3 Million THI project does mean that a start is being made at the north end of the High Street. Meanwhile the Portas Town Team are trying to support businesses on and around the High Street. BedfordBID believes that by showing businesses succeeding in the town that others may decide to relocate, invest or launch a new venture. That may not always be traditional retail.

Why don't landlords dress up their empty shops, or let someone else do it?

Local agents may try to help those who want to run a temporary pop-up shop – but as soon as a venue is opened it can become subject to prohibitive costs such as insurance, rates etc. Rarely will these be “free of cost” to the user.

Why isn't there free parking?

BedfordBID has asked for free parking and at Christmas 2011 paid for “free after 3pm” for one week in Lurke Street car park – it cost £13,000 to reimburse the council. BedfordBID has issued a car parking guide showing where free and cheaper car parking can be found in the town.

Winning hand from BedfordBID

BedfordBID brought together community groups, businesses, consumers and the council by leading the town team application for Portas cash.

The £50k has been used to consult with people, communicate the good news via #citizenjournalism and launch free training courses for businesses.

Meanwhile Friends of the Bedford High Street was set up as part of the council's THI project. Greg Warwick of Jeeves became the Chair.

Greg, who is a BID board director is now taking a leading role at the Portas Town Team = joined up thinking by High Street business people.



Greg Warwick is Chair of Friends of Bedford High Street and is now 'leader of the pack' in the Portas Town Team

New for 2013

BedfordBID is inviting businesses of all types (not only retailers and restaurants) to volunteer for a mystery shopping programme designed to celebrate success and deliver independent feedback. The scheme is providing the opportunity for independent businesses in the BID area to take advantage of all the opportunities on offer from Shopper Anonymous, a leading expert in customer service.

The programme will help participating businesses better understand what they can do to delight their customers, and improve sales as a result. The programme will include secret shopper visits, plus one to one feedback sessions for business owners. An 'awards presentation', to celebrate successes in the independent sector is also planned as part of the programme. Watch out for more details ...

Customers **UP** and Costs **DOWN**

Retail RadioLink Exclusion Scheme - members up
Footfall Up
Website Hits Up
Voucher Sales Up
Reward Card clients Up
App log-ins Up

Empty Shops - lower than regional and national averages
Business Rates – BID been helping businesses secure reductions
Fuel costs down – thanks to Utilitrack deal
Graffiti down – spot it, log it, remove it
Telecoms – cutting costs of calls and broadband

BedfordBID represents nearly 800 businesses in Bedford Town Centre, approximately 575 are levy payers - but all benefit from the activities of our Love Bedford brand. By supporting BedfordBID you are supporting your own trading environment and helping to attract new customers and investment into Bedford.
Contact your team on (01234) 404500 or talk to one of the Bluecaps.