

Business Improvement District Funded by Town Centre Businesses

THE BEDFORDBID COMPANY LIMITED COMPANY BY GUARANTEE
REVIEW PERIOD FROM 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST MARCH 2021

Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) was one of 12 towns which piloted the independent business-led model back in 2005; over 320 BIDs are now established around the country. Bedford BID has been operating successfully for sixteen years. In October 2019, a fourth term **BID4 Renewal was successful with 69% in favour by number and 88% by Rateable Value.**

The aim of the BedfordBID renewal 2020-2025 proposal is to:-

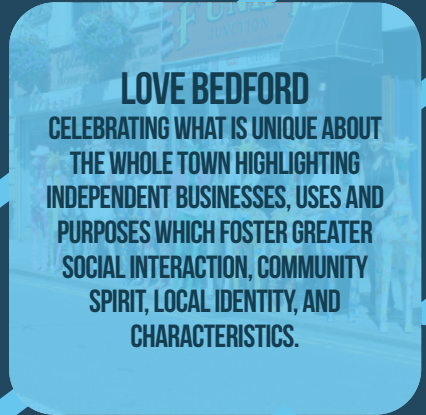
- Provide a welcoming environment and experience for businesses to prosper.
- Create a vibrant destination, working with partners to develop changes to compete whilst promoting and celebrating what is unique about the town for both day and evening economy.
- Support businesses with training and education designed to adapt with the changes in customer behaviour.
- Demonstrate how BedfordBID will enhance communication channels to engage and report back to businesses.



By building on the successful work of the past years and addressing the priorities raised from the pre-proposal business consultations, the 2020-25 Business Plan details four key themes
www.lovebedfordbusinesses.co.uk/perch/resources/bb-business-plan-2020-25w-min-1-1.pdf



**CLEAN, SAFE &
WELCOMING.**



LOVE BEDFORD
CELEBRATING WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT
THE WHOLE TOWN HIGHLIGHTING
INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES, USES AND
PURPOSES WHICH FOSTER GREATER
SOCIAL INTERACTION, COMMUNITY
SPIRIT, LOCAL IDENTITY, AND
CHARACTERISTICS.



**SUPPORTING
BUSINESSES.**



**MEASUREMENT
& REPORTING;
ENHANCED
COMMUNICATION.**

HEADLINES

2020/21



At the start of the 2020 financial year, following the declaration of a global pandemic, all non-essential expenditure was stripped back. The front-line BedfordBID team was initially furloughed to retain inhouse experience and avoid new recruits longer term whilst reducing overheads during anticipated cashflow poor times.

As online working became more apparent, IT became paramount. Systems were streamlined and operations consolidated to adapt to online WFH which coincided with vacating office premises in Lurke Street and taking up temporary storage and a short period of safely working 'on the hoof' with front-line team using mobile devices. A tenancy at Marks Mews Castle Lane was later secured at a reduced cost in October 2020.

The **headcount** reduced from seven to currently 3.5. A full-time marketing and communications post is still on hold with contracted-out digital expertise being the key focus and fulfilling the key priority during this COVID year.

The contracted-out **night team** staff were partly redeployed to support the daytime BedfordBID Champion role for a short time given the conclusion of the Government funding for rough



sleepers' emergency scheme at the beginning of August as beggars returned to town centre. They were also able to assist the day team as they supported with businesses reopening after the first easing of lockdown. With LNE sector reopening in part from 12th April 2021, the night team is planned to be reinstated albeit on reduced hours. The Retail Radio scheme and Bedford Businesses Against Crime (BeBAC) initiative assisted essential stores communication throughout lockdown is now being remobilised to all as the ease of restrictions are lifted from 12th April 2021.

The **IT support** was critical to also enable BID to keep in touch to offer best support so businesses could operate whilst enabling the team to keep in touch. The **first virtual AGM** was held in January 2021 with the appointment of two new directors **Alex Falcon Huerta** FCCA / Director, Soaring Falcon Accountancy and **Dean Thompson**, Distinct Group/Bedford Swan Hotel. Full list of Directors can be viewed at www.lovebedford.co.uk/about/bedfordbid-board.php.

The intention is for us to return to a programme of Board, Breakfast and Retail Radio Link meetings quarterly going forward. We will be covering a variety of subjects as well as providing the usual updates and information.

In tandem with British BIDs and Bedford Borough Council, whilst given the planned change to the BID4 levy threshold and further exemptions for the smaller businesses, BID reserves also enabled the operation of the BID to continue at baseline levels but with COVID support communications and cover town centre voucher redemption liability.

British
BIDs™





BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
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Love Bedford is the dominant brand for the town centre for BID businesses across all channels of communication.

COVID hubs were created for the **Love Bedford** website providing quick and easy reference for business and consumer updates in tandem with an emphasis on building content for SM platforms to increase engagement. **SM followers increased by 7% to 23,225 and over 74,000 page views on the Love Bedford website.**

Direct Mail campaigns to help signpost businesses to where and how they could access the ongoing “package of financial support measures” announced by the government over the COVID pandemic and during lockdown periods was critical. Likewise, positive news and individual promotion of new business models and online functionality were introduced to help sustain cash flow.

As the first lockdown eased BID launched the **#openforbusiness** campaign, supported COVID safe compliant initiatives such as BioMisting, promoted BID business’ offering expert advice and support as well as broadcast the Eat Out to Help Out (EOTHO) scheme. Pushing COVID compliance confidence and positivity, results of first week of EOTHO were +34.9% increase in footflow Monday 3rd August.

A video for the **Virtual Freshers Fair** 2020 was produced in collaboration with Bedford College and BID businesses providing student offers.

The announcement of the non-essential shops 'unlock' and the BID #openforbusiness campaign w/c 15th June resulted in +59% week on week footfall growth. August returns week on week also reported growth above national and regional trends: -

BEDFORD

+17.9%

EAST

+14.1%

HIGH STREET

+10.4%

UK

+14.9%

August Love Bedford online Directory results demonstrated an influx of traffic to the directory site of around 50% growth on last year's figures:-

USERS 
2,133


SESSIONS
2,555


PAGE VIEWS
5,701


AVG. SESSION DURATION
1M 33s

EAT OUT HUB
PAGE VIEWS
1,616

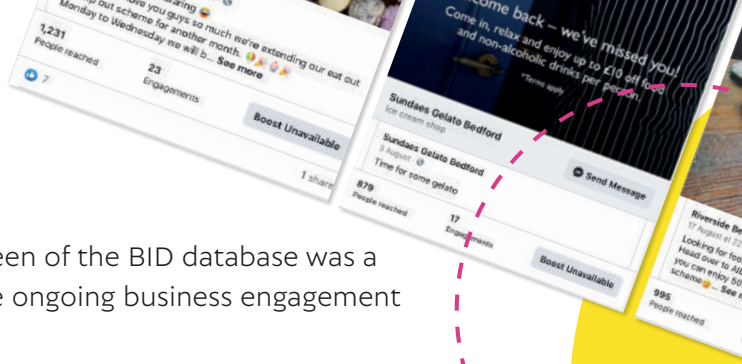


35,500

In total EOTHO posts on Facebook reached just shy of 35,500 people.


6,247

On Instagram our 'Eat Out to Help Out' Highlight Reel got gathered 6247 views



The cleaning and screen of the BID database was a constant to maximise ongoing business engagement DM e.g.:-

HOW BEDFORDBID IS HELPING YOU STAY #OPENFORBUSINESS

Keep us up to date including your online options and home delivery services.

Keep us updated for Direct message/emails etc asking for deals which will also be passed to the college intranet + free school and others who are open – we will pass on to make sure they receive.

PR and communications campaign to both online and printed audiences

To Consumer

We're open for business – story on news www
SM hashtag – already using on SM **Love Bedford**
#OpenforBusiness

PR stories on FB and Twitter + www news plus round up story to local printed media including T& C and Beds Indy etc + individual stories of those staying #openforbusiness

Print:

Love Bedford is Open for Business

WHOLE Front Page of Borough edition with overspill individual stories inside

Full page inside Mid Beds / Kempston versions covering day and evening economy



Plus:

From Bedford with Love – Deliveries with poster pic outside one or two of restaurants who do deliveries with link to [www list 24,000](http://www.list24000.com) Business-to-businesses BID magazine distribution including business features and directory.

EOTHO was pushed hard and produced a lot of content for SM platforms. Key posts examples can be viewed in the overview and zipped documents link at www.lovebedford.co.uk/top/downloads Many businesses later extended their deals with the Love Bedford Offers site populated with further information which continued to generate lots of traffic along with promotional news of new businesses.

During April 2020 to March 2021, Bedford has welcomed **39 new businesses** which have been promoted through Love Bedford. With more notable FB posts this year, there has been a lot of new businesses open everyone has had thousands or in some cases, tens of thousands of views thanks to our reach on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).



The Bedford College Group **Annual Achievement Ceremony 2020** is the largest event in their calendar with more than 750 people joining for an evening to celebrate and recognise the outstanding achievements of the students which this year took place online. At this prestigious event, students and apprentices receive awards to recognise their success, looked on by an audience of family and friends, representatives from the industry and local employers as well as key community leaders.



BedfordBID recognition on the College website benefited from on average 35,000 unique visitors each month plus targeted communications to both students and staff whilst BID business enhanced celebrations with Just Eat e-voucher offers on the night.

In September working with the Inclusive town centre team and Hidden Disabilities, 35 businesses signed up to the community charged and timely Sunflower scheme.

Remember November promotional campaign included the **2020 Christmas window dressing competition** which attracted 45 entries and generated Views: 657 (+ 87%) Votes: 271 (+63%). BedfordBID also supported the Bedford Borough Council Christmas Trail and the Love Bedford town centre vouchers were relaunched. All stakeholders welcomed the promotion of the new Click and Collect town centre parking bays all of which were included in the dedicated Christmas online hub. Businesses received special crime prevention advice packs for over the festive season.

Christmas lights were enhanced to offer a festive, cheery welcome with plans and discussions already in place to extend the lights to complement town centre improvements on High Street and Silver Street in 2021.

BID lights were installed at

- St Cuthberts Street
- Harpur Street
- Tavistock Street, The Broadway
- St Peters Street
- St Peters gardens
- Howard Street
- Mill Street
- Harpur 'square' and outside Clinton Cards tree lights



ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE, DAY AND NIGHT



Despite the epidemic curves, the Bedford BID Businesses Against Crime (BeBAC) day and night economy initiative achieved further success and growth by the frontline BID team ...



Day Members:
from 311 to 534



Known Offenders:
from 259 to 452



Unknown Offenders:
from 66 to 56



Incidents Reported:
from 528 to 715



User Logins: from
8,373 to 10,726



ELNE Members:
from 57 to 129



Known Offenders:
from 42 to 41



Unknown Offenders:
from 19 to 1



Incidents Reported:
from 14 to 515



User Logins: from
1,649 to 2685





The award winning BedfordBID Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme continues to serve 227 members including 60 businesses, town centre Environmental Officers and recent COVID Marshals with radios of which 6 are used by Bedfordshire Police.



The BedfordBID Champions act as the 'eyes and ears' of the BedfordBID business community supporting the day-to-day operational needs of local


businesses ensuring that cleanliness and safety issues are rapidly addressed to help maintain the town's appearance and appeal.



The BedfordBID WIPEOUT Scheme; (Zero tolerance on Graffiti) has over 216 businesses on the scheme and an average of c40 reports are made each month and actions taken to address environmental issues working in partnership with Bedford Borough Council. BedfordBID also monitor and check status of two defibrillators in town centre.

Having good internal controls and corporate governance procedures are important for a BID. This leaflet is to demonstrate that income received is spent in accordance with plan and that there are authentic internal governance controls to ensure that this happens. Full Accounts and performance reports including the BedfordBID networking and briefing breakfast presentations, AGM papers, previous Annual Review documents and five year business plan are all available for download at www.lovebedford.co.uk or call 01234 404500.

The Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) is a democratically elected organisation, with a voluntary (elected) Board of Directors who represents the town's businesses. Bedford BID is a member of British BIDs and ATCM and subscribe to the National Survey for best practices. The list of Directors approved at the last AGM are also included online <http://www.lovebedford.co.uk/about/bedfordbid-board.php>

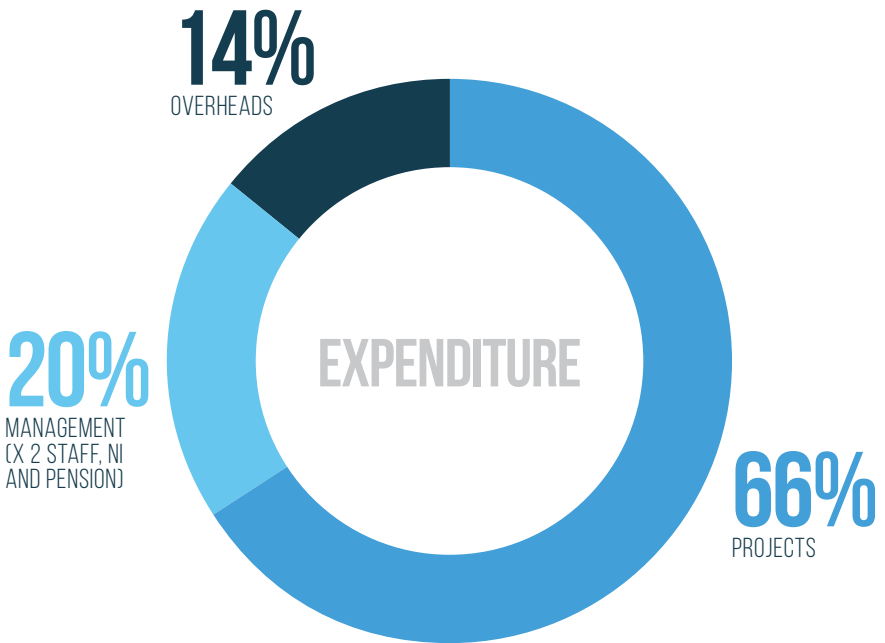
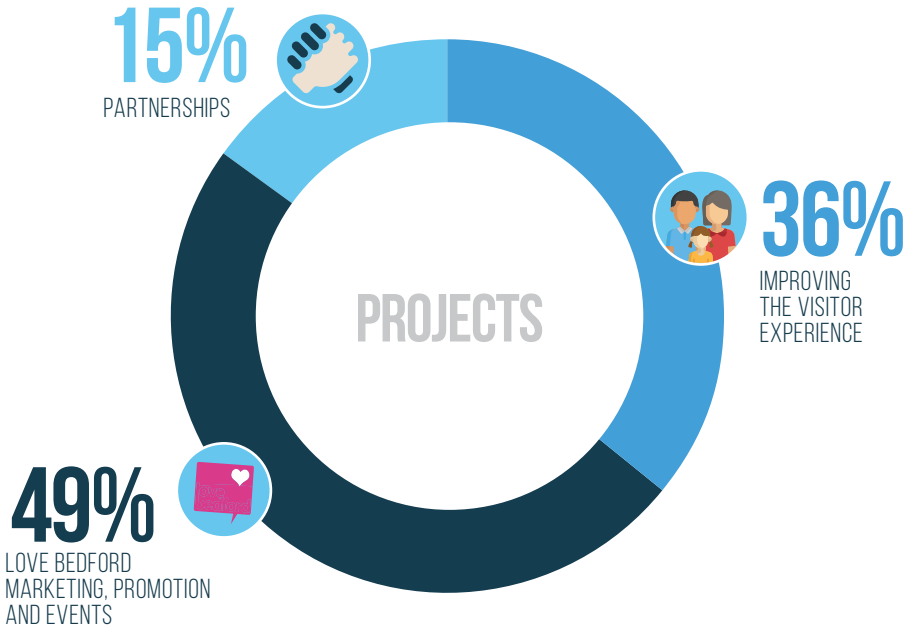


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TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY...

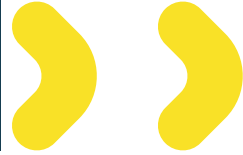
BedfordBID is open and accountable to its levy payers. The use of social media, an up-to-date website, news releases, e-shot news to levy payers, regular meetings and producing annual accounts, are some of the ways we ensure that the work of the BID is open and available for scrutiny by its levy payers. Every new business is visited to obtain business contacts for further communications.

	YR1 2020/21	YR2 2021/22	YR3 2022/23	YR4 2023/24	YR5 2024/25	TOTAL
025	424,739	424,739	424,739	424,739	424,739	2,123,695
ome*	9,975	9,975	9,975	9,975	9,975	49,875
ate Voluntary Membership **	1,400	1,428	1,457	1,486	1,515	7,286
itrack commissions ***	5,000	5,100	5,200	5,300	5,400	26,000
ents sponsorship ***	2,194	2,194	2,194	2,194	2,194	10,970
Other	443,308	443,436	443,565	443,694	443,823	2,217,823
x VAT)	178,800	178,800	178,800	178,800	178,800	894,000
elcoming ****	120,233	106,313	119,703	119,703	104,703	570,655
inences *****	9,000	12,000	9,000	12,000	9,000	45,000
	9,400	19,400	9,400	13,885	68,375	114,375
	68,375	68,375	68,375	68,375	68,375	341,875
	47,860	47,860	47,860	47,860	47,860	239,300
	441,583	441,583	441,583	441,583	441,583	2,207,818
						420,078



0
26
4,000
70,655
51,000
61,485
341,875
239,400
2,158,415
85,000

PARTNERSHIPS




March 2021

Council encourages businesses to join the HSHAZ scheme.

In September 2020, Bedford Borough Council, alongside partners Bedford BID and SEMLEP, was awarded £1.76 million under the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme to deliver building works and a Cultural Programme as part of the regeneration of Bedford High Street.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone will help make real physical improvements to the appearance of Bedford's High Street and historic buildings and bring spaces back into use. BedfordBID is both a member of the Partnership Board (Vice Chair) and the Cultural Consortium.

The Cultural Programme, running as part of the HSHAZ, is led by a Cultural Consortium made up of local organisations and focuses on highlighting the hidden treasures of Bedford High Street's rich heritage strengthened by the support and match funding from BedfordBID. The programme will start with a pilot project at the Bank Site on the junction of St. Paul's Square and the Embankment.



Property owners in the BID zone have been encouraged to sign up to the HSHAZ programme scheme. Businesses from Bedford High Street, BBTEA and Goldings, have already agreed to take part in the programme and will see refurbishments to their properties once building works begin.

Goldings Business Hub is planned to offer smart office space for small, growing or downsizing businesses and a business oriented café, perfect for holding meetings in town.

Bedford HSHAZ Website: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/invest-in-bedford/projects-infrastructure/high-street-heritage-action-zone/>

Saving money with Utilitrack. Many businesses have made substantial cost savings on utilities through local company Utilitrack's FREE utility cost evaluation service.

Savings to end of March 2021 are at £63,390.95. Whilst this figure is slightly lower from last year, it is important to remember the current climate and the need to secure the best possible deal for the client and depending on the market, prices increased can be inevitable. However, by benchmarking the clients rates success has been achieved with the best possible prices at the time of tendering so even where there has been an increase, the clients still gets the best deal.

Moving ahead **Utilitrack is a member of the Green Business Network and have agreements with many of the UK's greenest suppliers and will focus on those for any client who is particularly environment-focused.**





BedfordBID

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www.lovebedford.co.uk

The 2019 ballot result is a testament from businesses of all sizes, demonstrating that they are committed, feel supported and understand that this was great news for the town.

The full list of BID services is included in the five year plan together with full accounts, AGM reports and list of the volunteer Board of Directors on www.lovebedford.co.uk

To contact BedfordBID call 01234 404500,
email at info@lovebedford.co.uk