

BEDFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

WORKING FOR TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

FEBRUARY 2020



THE BEDFORBID COMPANY LIMITED COMPANY BY GUARANTEE
REVIEW PERIOD FROM 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 31ST MARCH 2020

In October 2019, the proposal to renew a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bedford for a fourth term, was approved. The majority of the business ratepayers in the proposed BID area who voted in a ballot, both by aggregate rateable value and number voting, voted in favour of the proposal. The full proposal and business plan April 2020 – March 2025 was despatched to all businesses in the BID zone. Online version is available at www.lovebedford.co.uk/ballot.php This also includes a wider review of the current BID term.

BID4 RENEWAL
69% IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER
88% BY RV. SUCCESSFUL

love bedford
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YOUR BID
BEDFORDBID
INDEPENDENT, BUSINESS-LED
FUNDED BY
TOWN CENTRE
BUSINESSES

RENEWAL BUSINESS PLAN
1ST APRIL 2020 – 31ST MARCH 2025



In addition to the research, planning and delivery of the BID4 Proposal, operational business continued as usual during 2019/20 along with the introduction of additional initiatives including:-

- ✔ The inaugural Love Bedford Visitor's Award which was presented to Graham Mabbutt of the successful BMKWT John Bunyan Community Boat project to recognise raising the profile of the area whilst providing numerous opportunities for businesses and promotion for tourism in Bedford.
- ✔ Commitment to the High Street Heritage Action Zone which will offer more support to town centre and build on the successful High Street Heritage Initiative improving the environment and visitor welcome.
- ✔ Expansion of the successful Taxi Marshal scheme introducing the BedfordBID night team serving the evening economy and night-time visitors to town centre.
- ✔ Community wide engagement fostering greater social interaction and community spirit through initiatives such as Purple Tuesday and the #Free to Feed new awareness campaign helping mums become more confident when breastfeeding in Bedford which coincided with World Breastfeeding Week.
- ✔ Launch of the collaborative Real Change initiative with partners helping to raise awareness with the public about services and support for rough sleepers just ahead of Homelessness Awareness Week 1st - 8th December.
- ✔ A weekend celebration of the new Bedford Christmas Fair culminating in a lights switch on ceremony and sponsorship of a firework spectacular on the banks of the River Ouse.



There has also been exceptional collaboration with Bedfordshire Police and Homeless Partnership, with words of support and endorsement about the impact of BeBAC (BedfordBID Businesses Against Crime) addressing prosecutions of the prolific 'professional' beggars and our intentions for development owing to the successful introduction. A BID Director is also planned to attend and carry on our good work with the evening economy through BedSafe and the Bedford BID Night Team.

Whilst the Transport 2020 plans aimed at providing the public realm improvements focussing on High Street & St Pauls Square starting later this summer are welcome, a communications and marketing activity plan will also be crafted to create anticipation and not frustration with both visitors and businesses during this time.

Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) was one of 12 towns which piloted the independent business-led model back in 2005; over 300 BIDs are now established around the country. Bedford BID has been operating successfully for fifteen years.



The BedfordBID vision is to *create a vibrant environment and broaden the role of the town centre beyond shopping towards being a great place for people to spend time*. The 2015-2020 Business Plan details three key priorities: -

1. To market and promote Bedford town centre and make Bedford a destination through the presentation of high-quality events
2. To enhance the visitor experience and develop the customer offer
3. To continue to forge strong partnerships, working with others to create a vibrant, economically strong and attractive town for residents and visitors alike and be sustainable.

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 Bedford BID 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 www.lovebedford.co.uk/about/bedfordbid-board.php



2019/20

HEADLINES:-

Actual expenditure remains consistent. Over 70% of revenue was spent on projects and services with 11% on Overheads. National BID Guidelines suggest an industry acceptable level standard @ 20%. Collection Cost as a % of Levy Income comparison shows that Bedford is in line with the majority of BIDs in the UK who have costs of less than 2.47% of their levy income to collect their levy.

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

Love Bedford NOW!, is a celebration of News, Offers and Whats-on, broadcasting the positive and pushing traffic to Love Bedford online platforms giving businesses access to the latest advanced social media promotion in the town centre - large or small!

During 2019/20, over 70 videos were broadcast incorporating scripts for an average of 4 businesses each time promoting their business and location to an audience of c11,000 per video and over 70,000 views on SM over the Christmas period.

The dedicated events section on the Love Bedford website is now one of the most popular. It has developed a reputation as the 'go to' site for the definitive guide to the town with unique users in excess of £100k. The most viewed pages are Events, What's On and town centre guide.



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Love Bedford website Business Directory traffic increased by 4.6%. Organic traffic is up 40.8% and organic sessions have increased by 41.6%.

82 multi branded **business e-shots** were delivered during the year to a growing mailing list database of over 8000 cultivated by competitions and website Hello! Bar. Opening rates c28% and average open rate 19.7%.

210,000
DIRECT MAIL E-SHOTS
DELIVERED

OVER
23,000
ONLINE DIRECTORY
SEARCHES TOTAL, SEE
LANDING PAGE FOR NEW
BUSINESS OPENINGS

Clicks through to email sign-up page is up by over 90% on last year and consumer mailing list database has grown to over 8,000 with c5,000 active 'followers' (this varies due to changes from campaign titles) plus contact with 12,000 students through Bedford College.

Social media platforms have increased on average by 5% to:-


9,075
FOLLOWERS


8,897
FOLLOWERS


3,689
FOLLOWERS

On average 6.8 e-shots delivered to all businesses each month with average opening rates c30%

Keeping it Local! Over 290 businesses participate in the Love Bedford Voucher scheme which, at over 90% redemption level, has generated over £1m going back into BID businesses.



Saving money with Utilitrack.

Many businesses have made substantial cost savings on utilities through local company Utilitrack's FREE utility cost evaluation service, saving to date for BID businesses £63,521.28

Stats as of March 2020

Generating foot flow around the town for all BID businesses included last year the successful Christmas window dressing competition when 19 businesses were voted for through our online competition plus a new Halloween TRAIL which attracted participation from businesses including:-





New to Bedford last year was the 2019 Christmas Fair, hosted on the 23rd & 24th November which offered BID Businesses participation including:-

- ✔ Michael R Peters
- ✔ Roll Back World
- ✔ Magic Garden
- ✔ Charisma
- ✔ Home Fragrance Company
- ✔ Castle Lane Garage
- ✔ Heritage Bedford
- ✔ Lingers Butchers hog roast
- ✔ Close Encounters
- ✔ ELEV8 STUDIOS
- ✔ Church choir collaboration
- ✔ Keech Hospice Care Charity shop

The College Student Achievements Ceremony is also sponsored by BedfordBID when over 150 students receive awards in recognition of their success and 750 guests attend; a memorable occasion for everyone including the many companies whose own staff has studied at the College.

The BID continues to work with the BedSafe Licensees group boosting its support to the ENTE with the provision of administrative assistance, BeBAC night time scheme, training and funding BIIAB award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing.

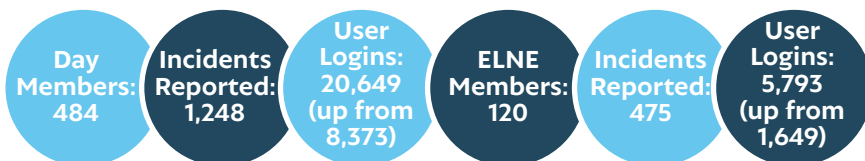


ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE, DAY AND NIGHT



During November 2018, BedfordBID enhanced the Retail RadioLink and Exclusion Scheme to launch the BedfordBID Businesses Against Crime (BeBAC) app based initiative, designed to improve reporting and evidencing for prosecutions and the prevention of persistent ASB. Compliant with Data Protection Act 1998 / 2018 GDPR legislation, this significant partnership working is enabling greater ownership from businesses and intelligence gathering being used by Bedfordshire Police. During 2019/2020:-

- ✓ CPW/CPN's (Community Protection Warning / Notice) Issued: 11 / 13
- ✓ CBO's (Community Behaviour Order) issued: 7
- ✓ To be issued imminently: 6+ pending Operation days of action, which are being implemented by the Police. These are scheduled weekly (resource permitting)
- ✓ Prosecutions: 13 (retail theft) Further arrests (results pending)



The award winning BedfordBID Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme continues to serve 227 members including 60 businesses and town centre Environmental Officers with radios of which 6 are used by Bedfordshire Police. c46 active exclusion orders issued by businesses / 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.





Attendance at the BedfordBID breakfast has increased to an average of 70, culminating this year with important insights ranging from Transport 2020 High Street improvements to Future High Streets Fund application.

The latest round of Business Mentoring included attendance at the New Year Business Summit by Companions Real Bread 3 St Peters Mimos St Peters Dental Studio Marvellous Minds



"I just wanted to thank BedfordBID for giving us the opportunity to access the business accelerator summit on January 27th. My colleague Gordon and I found it very informative and useful in terms of moving the business forward and in particular staff management. All of the speakers present made an impact on how we will develop our business but in particular the organiser reached out to us in terms we could understand and was on hand several times during the day for our queries. I would not hesitate in recommending this training wholeheartedly to anyone and everyone!"

**Director of operations & Support worker
Companions Real Bread CIC**



Engagement with businesses is further demonstrated through an increased participation in features and advertising in the Love Bedford quarterly glossy publications distributed to over 20k homes and industrial estates (B2B edition). These feature Hair & Beauty, Food & Drink, Christmas and Business Services (non retail sector). The engagement with more businesses for the Business magazine provided heightened exposure for:-

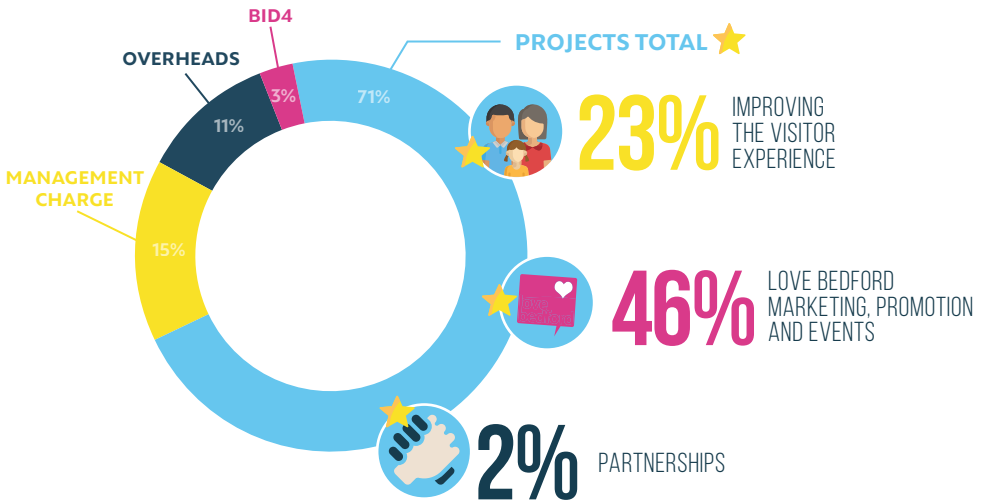
- ✔ Bedford College
- ✔ Mayfair (mortgages / insurance)
- ✔ The Foundry
(Networking and desk space)
- ✔ Sharman Law (Solicitor)
- ✔ Humphress & Burgess
(Opticians)
- ✔ Lucky 14
(Design agent on Mill Street)
- ✔ Marvellous Minds
(Tuition Centre)
- ✔ Bedford Corn Exchange
- ✔ River Festival advert
- ✔ My Estate (estate agency)
- ✔ Utilitrack (Utilities)
- ✔ Soaring Falcon
(Accountancy)
- ✔ Visitor Info
Centre(relocation editorial piece)
- ✔ Zip yard (Tailor)
- ✔ The Jobs Hub
(Editorial piece)
- ✔ Bedford Swan



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 futher communications.

How your money is spent...



Partnerships



LOOKING AHEAD...

Going forward ...BID4 Renewal - 69% in favour by number, 88% by Rateable Value. Successful.

BedfordBID was among the first twelve to pilot a Business Improvement District (BID) in 2005. Town centres are evolving. Given the impact that on-line shopping, changing customer needs and expectations are having on town centres, Government, investors and business leaders now recognise BIDs as the best way to keep our towns alive. Consequently, there are now 320 BIDs across the UK.

We are delighted to have secured another five years to deliver our Business Plan. BedfordBID is committed to responding to the needs of the town centre businesses, in all sectors; evening economy, retail, the professional & public sector, hospitality, food & drink, culture and heritage. All these make up our town centre and all need to thrive in order for the town to benefit more widely.

Over the years, BedfordBID has proven to be responsive to the needs of town centre businesses in order to tackle immediate issues and will continue to do so. Following an extensive consultation period, we captured ambitions, ideas and aspirations to move Bedford forward in line with six priorities identified in our business plan www.lovebedford.co.uk/ballot.php

BedfordBID is committed to putting at the forefront of our ambitions safety, a welcoming environment and experience, shaping change, being one business voice, delivering value, investing in place making communications plus supporting events. We are delighted to be able to work with the town for the next five years.





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www.lovebedford.co.uk

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

BedfordBID Board of Directors

The full list of BID services is included in the five year plan together with the 2019/20 Year Planner <http://lovebedford.co.uk/top/downloads.php>, 2019 AGM report and accounts.

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