



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses
www.lovebedford.co.uk

The BedfordBID Company Limited Company by Guarantee Review 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024



The Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) has been **boosting the town centre since 2005**. It was one of 12 towns which piloted the independent business-led model of which the active BID community in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ireland now totals 335 (source: National BID Survey September 2023). Business ratepayers in Bedford with a business of the required rateable value to be eligible to vote were issued with a postal ballot to say whether they supported the renewal of the BedfordBID. In October 2019, a fourth term **BID4 Renewal ballot 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 including 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.

Download the survey here!



Have your say

Later in 2024, BedfordBID will have a renewal ballot due. If you would like to provide feedback to help shape another five-year plan, please download this survey ...

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. To download a copy, visit <https://lovebedford.co.uk/about/bedfordbid-ballot/>



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; and enhanced communication.





BedfordBID levy money is ring-fenced for use only on BID projects and services. BIDs cannot subsidise local authority statutory obligations, however, BIDs can enhance services.

It is only through the successful collection of BID levies that BedfordBID can provide the agreed business plan initiatives designed to enhance the trading environment. Money can only be spent when funds are received. Whilst this makes planning more challenging, it has been achievable due to prudent financial management and protection of company reserves.

The commencement date of the current BID4 arrangements was the first day of April 2020 and the duration of the BID arrangements is for 5 years ending on the last day of March 2025.

The annual BID levy is set at 2% (£0.02 in the £) of the Rateable Value shown in the Local Non-Domestic Rating List (on the First of April of each year). A BID levy is payable for each chargeable period within the duration of the BID term. The BID levy is payable by the non-domestic ratepayer. Where the ratepayer changes during the financial year, the BID levy will be apportioned accordingly and calculated on a daily basis.

Herediments exempt from the BID levy during this period are shown in the local Non-Domestic Rating List on the First of April each year of the BID and include those with a rateable value of the “specified rateable value” or less. The specified rateable value is the higher of £12,000 or the maximum rateable value for that year at which a ratepayer may be entitled to 100% small business rate.

Bedford Borough Council is responsible for collecting the BID levy. The levy payable for each chargeable period is due in one payment or two instalment payments a month apart. This can be arranged upon request in advance to Bedford Borough Council.



How we spend your money

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 the plan and that there are authentic internal governance controls to ensure that this happens. Full Accounts and copy governance papers such as Board meetings, AGM papers, previous Annual Review documents and the five-year business plan are all available for download at www.lovebedford.co.uk or call 01234 404500 for hard copies.

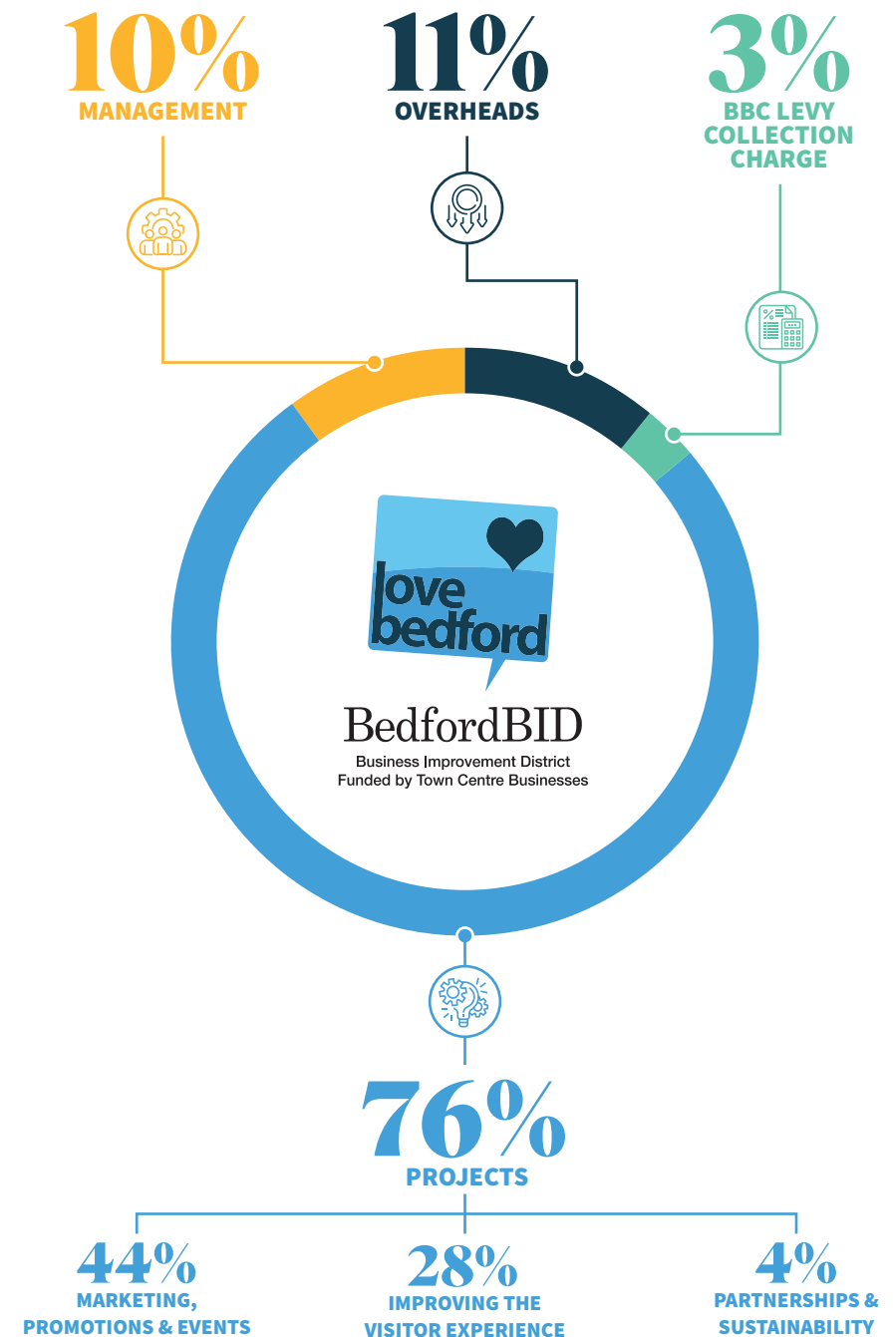
Transparency and Accountability

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

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.

How your money is spent and allocate our time

Despite recent inconsistent levy payments and a reduction in the actual levy yield, the use of necessary reserves and cost savings have enabled a streamlined and comparable spend throughout the year and versus 2022/23





BedfordBID
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Love Bedford: Marketing & Promotions

Love Bedford is the successful customer-facing promotional brand created by BedfordBID to promote over 500 town centre businesses large and small, retail, services, and experiences.

www.lovebedford.co.uk **The Love Bedford website**, expertly reimagined by the BedfordBID team, has emerged as a leading platform for promoting Bedford Town Centre, boasting a visual and functional overhaul that sets a new standard in destination marketing.

Enhanced with rich professional photography and videography, the site now features dynamic Google Map integration, pinpointing businesses, events, and offers within an improved, mobile-friendly business directory. This innovative feature facilitates seamless on-the-go exploration of Bedford's businesses, events, and offers, making it easier than ever for visitors and locals to discover all that the town centre has to offer.

With significant improvements in search engine visibility and user engagement, the website employs advanced analytics to refine content strategy, ensuring every piece of information is impactful. This comprehensive upgrade transforms the Love Bedford site into a leading example within the Business Improvement District sector, offering an unparalleled resource that bolsters the businesses we represent and enhances the experience for visitors to the town.

Latest Unique Visitor Numbers to website



From November 2023 to March 2024 – 27,879

Organic Search Rank



Top growing positions for search engine results as reported by Google.

“What’s on in Bedford” search terms in Google, Love Bedford ranks **#1 and #3**

“Bedford Events” **#1 and #8**

“Carparks Bedford” **#6**

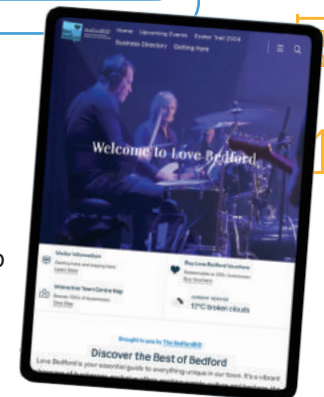
“Bedford town centre” **#1 and #5**

“Food & drink Bedford” **#2**

“Bedford town Map” **#5**

“Bedford Businesses” **#2 and #4**

Independent businesses help to provide the unique attraction for a town centre with visitors also looking to combine leisure to create days out. BedfordBID seeks to promote a vibrant town centre with a wide range of things to do both day and night. By celebrating our businesses, we help to raise the profile of the town with compelling reasons to visit which encourages footfall for businesses to convert to sales.



**AVERAGE
+21.34%
YEAR-ON-YEAR
FOOTFALL
DURING
'EVENT'
MONTHS.**

Throughout 2023/24, Bedford BID has either supported, funded, initiated and/or promoted over 31 attractions/business campaigns throughout the year, helping to raise the footfall and promote the town's point of difference at traditionally busy periods of the retail calendar as the destination of choice to bring visitors to Bedford rather than elsewhere i.e. at Christmas.

- Love Bedford Easter Trail
- Eat Feast
- Pre-Coronation window competition.



**MAY
FOOTFALL
+1%**

Bedford College **Hair & Beauty Show** is the highlight of the student's training with backing from Love Bedford and businesses. Hair and beauty are two services which cannot be accessed over the internet. Businesses at the event are represented by their young apprentices and by the trainees of the future. The show is organised by staff and students from Brooks Hair & Beauty Salon on the High Street, Bedford, part of The Bedford College Group. **Love Bedford vouchers were awarded to successful students; 75% redemption putting money back into town centre businesses.**



**APRIL
FOOTFALL
+19%**

**JUNE
FOOTFALL
+37%**

The Great Big Green Week; Town Centre BIG GREEN BRUSH UP!

Businesses took part in a town centre litter pick and brush-up, then throughout the week Bedford BID promoted town centre businesses with green goals, sustainable practices and eco-friendly products and services via our Love Bedford social media platforms to attract custom.



Father's Day Promotion: Beers & Cheers £5 Love Bedford voucher pub giveaway; 84% redemption.



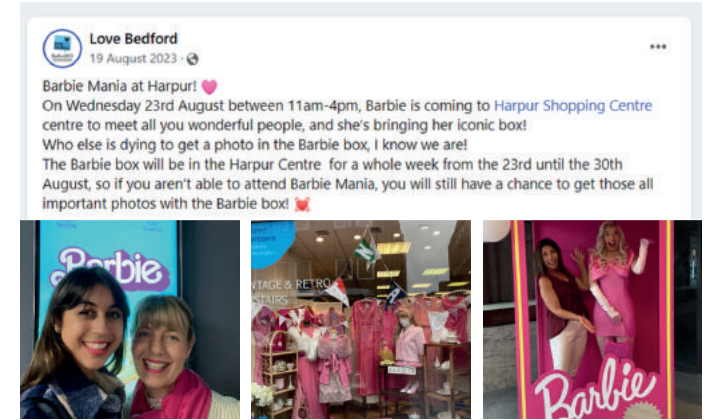
Armed Forces Day

Bedford Parks Concerts Golden Ticket and selfie trail; high impact with business engagement and involvement.



AUGUST FOOTFALL
+56%

Barbie Mania comes to Bedford!



JULY FOOTFALL
+15%

Independent Retailer Month; Promotional campaign with Free Prize Draw to discover Bedford's Best Independent business and 200 goodie bag giveaways; 93% voucher redemption

Italian Festival

HSHAZ (High Street Heritage Action Zone) The Big Fit Party and Take to the Streets

Pride of Place Bedford opening

Bedfringe.



SEPTEMBER FOOTFALL
+21%

NICE Comic Convention



NOVEMBER FOOTFALL
+18%

Bedford Christmas **Lights Switch On.** Compared to 2022 event dates, 25th November 2023 had an +18% increase of footfall with endorsement from businesses supporting the view with it being "higher most of the day", as well as seeing a real peak later in the evening when the switch on/event was taking place.





Bedford Town Centre Christmas Light Switch On included the **Love Bedford Stage** in Harpur Square with local singers, school choirs and dance entertainment all day with refreshments, offers and discounts courtesy of town centre businesses.

Town Centre **Christmas lights enhancements** are funded by the town centre businesses and on display at The Broadway, St Peter's Street, St. Peter's Gardens, St Cuthbert's Street, Mill Street, Harpur Square, Harpur Street and Howard Street. BedfordBID businesses also funded the Christmas wreath at Silver Street.

It also included the much-anticipated return of the **FREE Love Bedford Express Land Train** all weekend. The weekend was planned to coincide with **Small Business Saturday** when Love Bedford celebrated the town's fabulous independent businesses on Saturday 2nd December who generously donated offers and information to put into 300 **Bedford at Christmas Goodie Bags** which included a £5 Love Bedford Voucher to spend in the town centre, keep-it-safe purse bells and festive chocolate treats!



2nd & 3rd **A Very Merry Christmas Market Weekender**

collaboration with Bedford Markets and Bedford Flea, Affordable Art and Local Produce Market. This two-day collaboration also included the Love Bedford sponsored marquee at Riverside which involved town centre businesses plus choirs and outdoor acts on market square on the outside seating areas of the restaurants.

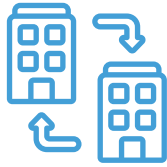


Throughout the year as well as trails, competitions in both printed media and online included the cheeky Elf on the Shelf social media campaign and Christmas window dressing competition designed to highlight new businesses and capture contact details to cultivate the BedfordBID mailing list.

Love Bedford Gift Vouchers are the perfect way to keep it local. Redeemable at over 230 businesses, 78% of those being independents, they can be used in restaurants, cafes, bars, hairdressers, beauty salons, and so much more ... Analysis of the businesses who redeem the vouchers, demonstrates the success with up-selling.

DECEMBER FOOTFALL
+6%

Reach, resonating content and messaging to target audiences.



Business to business

e-newsletters x 40 themes/campaign titles during 2023/24

 1,227 contacts

 827 current subscribers

An average of over three times a month, e-shots and newsletters sent to businesses provide opportunities to get involved and join in with the updates.

Engagement Trends: Open rates generally fall within the range of 10% to 40%, indicating consistent audience engagement.

Successful Campaigns: “King Charles III Coronation email” stands out with a high click rate of 6.63%. “August News” and “Bedford Park Concerts – Summer 2023 Discount for BID Members” also demonstrated high engagement.

Timing and Seasonality: Seasonal events and promotions generate higher engagement, indicating the importance of aligning content with relevant times of the year.



Business to consumer

Circa: 30 themes/campaign titles a year/newsletters

 6,389 contacts

 5,236 subscribers

 Average open rate 24.6%

Engagement Trends:
High engagement for events

Invitations: Emails regarding significant events i.e. the King Charles III Coronation and Bedford Park Concerts, show higher open rates, indicating strong audience interest in event-related content.

Seasonal Themes Attract Attention: Campaigns tied to specific holidays or seasonal events, such as Mother’s Day, Easter, and Christmas, tend to have higher engagement rates, highlighting the importance of thematic relevance in content planning with businesses.

Best Performer: The Italian Festival and Independent Retail Week email stands out with the highest click rate, indicating a strong interest in community and cultural events.



Facebook Followers: 11,798 total, with a higher concentration of followers aged 35-44.



Instagram Followers: 5,642 total, also showing a significant follower base in the 35-44 age group but with a stronger representation among younger audiences compared to Facebook.



61% Bedford based.



9,158 followers on X (formerly Twitter).



The BedfordBID team also write about businesses and events in the town centre for local publications BedsLife and Times & Citizen whose circulation falls within our immediate catchment and the newer residential areas; 22,000 circulation for Times and Citizen and BedsLife 47,000 circulation. Global Radio are used to widen the penetration into 20+ minute drive time.

Partnerships a voice for business

BedfordBID continues to act as a voice for local businesses, representing members' interests and lobbying on their behalf whilst keeping them informed of developments, issues, and opportunities at a local and national level.

In July 2023, BedfordBID provided feedback for the Community Safety survey aimed at helping to assess crime and anti-social behaviour and inform the new Community Safety Plan 2023-26. The plan works with housing associations, local businesses and voluntary/community organisations to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behavior, drug and alcohol misuse and increase people's perceptions about safety and well-being in our communities.

In September 2023, businesses were invited to voice their opinions and the BedfordBID Directors provided a report to Bedford Borough Council Exec Committee to finalise the Public Space Protection Order renewal in set to tackle street drinking and related anti-social behaviour within Bedford town centre.



Saving money with Utilitrack.

Many businesses continue to make cost savings on utilities through the local company Utilitrack's FREE utility cost evaluation service.



In January 2024 BedfordBID was invited to consult with all businesses to comment and provide input from public transport users, residents, businesses, and visitors within the Borough regarding local bus services and other public transport alternatives. The feedback received will play a crucial role in shaping the council's forthcoming Public Transport Policy.

In February 2024 businesses were invited to attend the PCC (**Police and Crime Commissioner**) **Annual Business Conference 2024** to raise issues from BID Businesses and hear from the PCC and the police about crime/business safety.

Also in February 2024, BedfordBID responded to the Rough Sleeper Strategy consultation with the overriding recommendation that more resources are to be applied to this and encourage the Council to take an active approach if we are to achieve:

- ▶ A reduction in rough sleeping
- ▶ Increase confidence of vulnerable people using the town centre
- ▶ Improve the image of the town centre, including its cleanliness and overall appearance
- ▶ Reduce theft/criminal damage

Directors play key roles within the Bedford Town Deal Board, High Street Heritage Action Zone, Community Safety Partnership and Bedford Inclusive Town to ensure a joined up approach and ensure the needs of the businesses are met.

In November 2023, BedfordBID was invited to respond to consultation regarding the Town Centre's Vision to which progress has already been made,

Town Centre Vision response November 2023

What we want ...

- ✓ An urgent sustainable plan for large vacant units including the former Debenhams and Beales and other prominent vacant units.
- ✓ A plan for Church Arcade to revitalise the area including Church (pigeon) Square.
- ✓ Joined up communication between BedfordBID and strategic partners including Bedford Borough Council.
- ✓ Relevance – developments and initiatives which benefit the sustainability of town centre and its business community.
- ✓ Reasons to attract the 'youth' market and squash "nothing for me" feedback.
- ✓ Skilled resource and capacity to enable strategic partners to deliver a vibrant town centre and future proof.
- ✓ An environment to attract/retain talented and skilled people to want to work in the town.
- ✓ A clean, attractive, safe, well maintained, and welcoming town centre for visitors.
- ✓ Access and infrastructure – good public transport and connectivity including businesses parking plan and reliable bus service.
- ✓ Directional signposting around the town promoting clearly defined areas/USPs.
- ✓ An agreed tenant mix for commercial agents and landlords to support which appeals to those who chose to live, work or visit town centre to increase catchment penetration, extend dwell time and 'basket' spend.
- ✓ Define catchment area and aspiration; are we convenience i.e. 10 minutes 'drive time'?
- ✓ Consistent business opening times and hours.
- ✓ To value a Night Time Economy (NTE) market and late-night shopping appeal given captive audience capacity with increased residential.
- ✓ Agree reasons to market the town as a destination to promote wider catchment area and higher spend.
- ✓ A vibrant open market programme and smarter market stalls; best practices to be investigated (Borough Market, London).

- ✓ Ongoing maintenance programme of shop fronts and cleaning of entrances by the businesses especially those with product lines that damage/deface the pedestrian walkways.
- ✓ Landlords to take responsibility for the condition they leave empty units and to leave windows and agreed signage in a clean and tidy state.
- ✓ A vacant unit strategy which enables permissions to 'dress' vacant windows FOC and minimal vacancy period.
- ✓ Town centre residential areas aimed at attracting residents who will add to the economic prosperity of the town and spend money within the business community as part of the emerging captive audience.
- ✓ Place making 'polish' – seating, maintained floral decorations and landscaping.
- ✓ Establish the economic impact of tourism. Culture is also important to sustain development and community building. Devise a cultural and tourism strategy, budget and resource to enable embracing tourism facilities.
- ✓ Tourist information point.
- ✓ Adequate services arrangements to alleviate rubbish sacks on pedestrian pavements from both businesses and residential areas.
- ✓ Develop a walking and cycling strategy to keep pedestrianised areas safe and open.
- ✓ Police presence.
- ✓ Regular (at least once a month) deep cleaning/jet washing including alleyways.
- ✓ Businesses to work together to provide a town centre experience that draws people in and excites them – this town needs an audience.

What we don't want ...

What we don't want ...

- ✗ More gambling outlets.
- ✗ Drug dealing or taking.
- ✗ Beggars at car park payments and ATM machines.
- ✗ Speeding on High Street and loud music late at night
- ✗ Unattended spillages, human faeces, vomit, pigeon droppings.
- ✗ Vacant unit alarms unattended.
- ✗ Queens Street dilapidated type signs.
- ✗ Peddlers and buskers who add nothing to the placemaking theatre of the town.



The Bedford **High Street Heritage Action Zone** initiative has been a joint project between Bedford Borough Council and Historic England, in partnership with BedfordBID and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

BedfordBID has a history of capital investment into the town's prosperity and sustainability. The latest collaboration to which BedfordBID extended its support, provided further opportunities for the essential enhancement of High Street and regeneration of beautiful historical buildings whilst repurposing premises to match the evolving changes of high streets.

BedfordBID also funded the programme of community engagement projects including competitions and support for the occupation of temporary premises and help to further promote the historical heritage of town centre.

These initiatives contribute to the shared value of investment from central government, future investment into the town and new businesses helping partners to achieve aspirations for future proofing the town.

The completion of the £1.76m Bedford High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme includes the following:

A programme of restorative building works transforming of six prominent shopfronts and making the buildings more accessible, – All Ears, The Blue Monk; Sundaes Gelato; the former Goldings building; The Medic Clinic; and the Salvation Army building – in the town centre, preserving and enhancing Bedford's rich architectural history. Maintenance and debranding work is also underway at the former Debenhams building.

BedfordBID supported the delivery of an engaging programme of community and cultural events, including a walking tour of Bedford High Street cultural activities including vibrant 3D art produced by a world-renowned illusion artist, and the chance for people to create their own mini versions of high street buildings.

As part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone, BedfordBID was also a strategic partner in the arrangements for a £4.5 million proposal to reduce traffic on the High Street. This was part of a wider re-organisation of the traffic flow restricting the High Street to one-way traffic, increasing the size of the footpaths along the High Street and created a new area of the public realm.

BedfordBID was both a member of the Partnership Board (Director of Operations was Vice Chair) and initially the Cultural Consortium.

Improving the Visitor Experience

The BedfordBID Champions have been an integral part of the town centre landscape and Bedford's business community. They act as the 'eyes and ears' of the town and link between businesses, emergency services and relevant council services. The BedfordBID office team pass on issues and concerns as well as communicating important information and opportunities for all business sectors. They also act as the 'face' of BedfordBID to visitors, providing information and ensuring a safe, clean and welcoming environment by reporting issues to Bedford Borough Council and working closely with Bedfordshire Police. All staff (x 2.5 full time) are First Aid trained. They also undergo Customer Service team training/ refreshers.

During 2023/24, 376 graffiti, StreetLink, Street cleansing and highway engineers' reports were sent by the frontline team. The BID team also carry out regular weekly checks, updates, and repositioning of the town centre defibrillators.

The dedicated BedfordBID night team consists of two SIA (Security Industry Association) licensed operators who support the town centre on a Friday 7pm – 4am and Saturday 7pm – 4am. They are not tied to any venue, but their hybrid role encompasses reporting and signposting support available to beggars, addressing anti-social behaviour, supporting venues and door staff with any incidents that may arise, working alongside the police to assist where needed and providing support and assistance to the public visiting the BID NTE (Night Time Economy) venues.

They also operate the BedfordBID taxi marshalling at the end of the night. The team report back each week and provide body worn camera footage of any incidents that have taken place in case further evidence is needed for prosecution.

The BedfordBID also acts as secretary for the BedSafe group (town centre licensees) organising membership, meeting invites, minutes, and communications. BID also covers the insurance costs and in the past have provided accredited training courses for venue staff to attend. Recently we have also grown in membership numbers and continue to include new venues from outside the town centre.



The dedicated BedfordBID night team consists of two SIA (Security Industry Association) licensed operators who support the town centre on a Friday 7pm – 4am and Saturday 7pm – 4am.

BedSafe meetings have continued to operate with enormous success and are a key point of delivery for information. The banned scheme continues to be a success also. As businesses in our zone, we also support all NTE premises with general assistance in any issues they may be facing.

In the past, Bedford BID has contributed to initiatives making the nightlife a safer experience particularly for women. The BID support projects through the delivery of written materials, posters, merchandising and plays a key role utilising its contacts to keep businesses informed and up to date. We continue to work closely and have strong relationships with the Community Safety Partnership, Police and both Police and Council licensing teams.

The BID manages the town centre radio link system which encompasses the essential day time live communications between businesses, CCTV, security teams and police. This also includes the night net system allowing pubs, leisure and nightclub teams to liaise directly and by providing the police teams on night owl radios to use when on duty, ensures prompt support. We also supply, manage, and assist with any repair/fault/requirement of radios for all NTE licensed venues, daytime businesses, and CCTV within the town centre BID zone.

A strong working relationship has been built with the new town centre community policing team on such Operations as Op Bless (focused on shoplifting and ASB in the Town Centre in the run up to Christmas), Op Highgate (ASB and begging) and Op Bellville (targeting prolific offenders) in which several known offenders have been arrested.



Bedford BID operates a disc system <https://discagainstcrime.com> operating title BeBAC (Bedford BID Businesses Against Crime) for businesses and use this to also manage the shared banning scheme.

The BID continues to lobby for appropriate levels of town centre police resource.

The BID continues to provide written statements and evidencing through BeBAC to assist in court with prosecutions.

 **Daytime Members – 212**

 **User Logins – 7,377**

 **Incidents Processed – 227**

 **Offenders Known – 564**

 **Offenders Unknown – 49**

 **Active exclusions – 23**


 **Night Members – 95**

 **User Logins – 6,749**

 **Incidents Processed – 177**

 **Offenders Known – 130**

 **Offenders Unknown – 70**

 **Active Bans – 89**

Coming up 2024/25;

snapshot headline provisional
dates for the diary.

Electronic diary now available visit
<https://lovebedford.co.uk/downloads/>



	Commencing Now: Town Deal works around town centre April '24 to March '25
APRIL	 <p>Universal Destinations & Experiences have acquired circa 500 acres of land near Bedford and are planning to build Europe's most exciting theme park destination and will be beginning a period of public engagement from in April 2024.</p>
	The John Bunyan 2024 boat cruises – season starts April.
	Guided walks starting in April around Bedford with Bedford Association of Tour Guides offer opportunities to learn about famous faces, the origin of buildings in the town centre, stories about WW2 and so much more.
	Saturday Craft Markets: 2nd Saturday in the month from April 13th – October 12th on Silver Square and Silver Street.
	Bella Ciao! A celebration of Italian Culture 15th to 27th April.
MAY	St Cuthbert's Street Festival – Bank Holiday Sunday 26th May.
	End of May Chefs on the Square : Simple Saturday cookery demos from town centre chefs using ingredients from the Charter Market and local small businesses. Video and recipes to be shared on Love Bedford website and social media platforms.
JUNE	Big Green Week – 8th to 16th June
	Armed Forces Day – Sunday 30th June

JULY	Bedford Summer Sessions Starting on 29th June and going into July, previously run under the banner of Bedford Park Concerts, where there will be a programme of artists and live music events with interactive promotions for town centre businesses.
	Independents retail month – Highlighting the wide range of fantastic independent businesses and voting for Bedford's Favourite Business
	Bedford Italian Festival – 7th July
	Bedfringe – The Quarry Theatre, St Luke's – 18th – 24th July
	Bedford Festival of Motoring on the High Street at the River Festival 20th & 21st July
SEPT	Heritage Open Days
OCT	Love Bedford BedfordBID Halloween Trail
NOV & DEC	Christmas Celebrations start from 23rd November with the Christmas lights Switch On. Love Bedford Land Train and Small Business Saturday together with Christmas festivities and competitions from 30th November. Look out for details!

Dates correct as at time of publication.

Keep up to date and in touch visit <https://lovebedford.co.uk/whats-on/>

Contact us on promotions@bedfordbid.co.uk with your business updates

Follow Love Bedford on Facebook and Instagram

Call the office 01234 404500

Bedford BID 4 2020-2025

new for BID4 Proposal overview summary review:

1. Affiliate membership to generate revenue but not to the detriment of service to BID zone members whilst facilitating extension of BID schemes at areas which impact upon the town i.e. Midland Road East.



Resource review currently under consideration.

2. New capital project – supporting High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), four-year programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities focusing on the High Street and immediate adjoining roads.



Done

3. Provide tailored education and training to help businesses make an asset of their physical retail space and their staff by creating opportunities to interact with customers that cannot be found online.



Ongoing

4. To invite community group representation to further support the balanced approach to the work of BedfordBID and development of a culture and central purpose that unites the community and attracts them to the town centre.



Exploring best practice with other towns but currently being delivered through HSHAZ community engagement and cultural activities programme along with representation at Bedford Inclusive Town.

5. Collaborate with partners to take part in the National High Street Perfect Day.



This was a government initiative pilot in 2019. Nothing further was heard on this so have assumed this initiative did not get the traction it needed. Important to note that with changes of the High Streets Minister and COVID, has meant there have been a few years where this was nearly impossible to run properly. Will continue to monitor and report further if applicable.

6. Increase in BID threshold from £8,100 to £12,000 to align with the statutory 100% small business rates relief relieving over 130 independently run small businesses of the BID levy. Plus launched instalment payments upon request subject to conditions.



Done

7. The introduction of town centre outdoor screen(s) to promote on site BID businesses, what's New, Offers and What's On to extend dwell time and encourage repeat visits.



Pending. In the meantime, BedfordBID has used the big screen at the River Festival to promote day and nighttime economy businesses from the BID zone to the wider audiences of the town's catchment.

8. Make permanent the trial BID night team extension to Taxi Marshal service.



Done within budgetary constraints.

9. Development of Love Bedford website and create a B2B facing section to benefit new business searches.



Done

10. Collaborate with partner organisations in projects to promote the town centre which create a 'sense of space' to foster greater social interaction, community spirit, local identity and characteristics which attract local people to take part in activities including – dining, leisure, sport, culture, the arts and entertainment.



Previously included Eat Feast, the HSHAZ Cultural programme. Recently Christmas 2023 The Very Merry Bedford Christmas Market Weekend two-day collaboration, was brought to the town by BedfordBID (including sponsorship funds), the Bedford Flea Affordable Art & Local Produce Market team and Bedford Borough Council.



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

Suite 8, Marks Mews, 37 Castle Lane, Bedford MK40 3NT

Tel: 01234 404500

Email: info@lovebedford.co.uk

Design by www.dougdawson.co.uk