**Bedford River Festival 2022 / BedfordBID analysis**

1. Footfall figures during the river festival this year?

**Week on week 2022**  
Bedford +29.9%  
High Street Index (Market towns) -3.3%  
UK -4.9%

**Year on Year**  
Bedford +43.5%  
Eastern region +14.3%  
High Street Index (Market Towns) +3.7%  
UK +15.3%

**Peak of the week** 15.00 Saturday 23rd July  
**Busiest period of the week** Saturday and Sunday 9am to 21.00 **Saturday** week on week +95% **Sunday** week on week +118.8% **Saturday** year on year +129.9% **Sunday** year on year +219.0%

**High Street** + 47.5% vs. Midland Road +16.3% week on week,   
**High Street** +56.2% vs. Midland Road + 32.9% year on year.

**2022 vs. 2019**Saturday + 90.7%, Sunday +102.8%  
% of week – Saturday +32%, Sunday +20%

*Source of Statistics: The national high street index is a benchmark created by  Springboard Research Ltd to deliver a national performance index based on footfall in town and city centres. Springboard has benchmarked High Street footfall activity for over 18 years. Data for the High Street index has been gathered by Springboard from 5000+ footfall counters across 300+ UK towns and cities.*

We have a number of positive SM posts we can forward to you. For those businesses who were open herewith snapshot …

*With reference to the addition of the car show to the festive I'd like to feedback that it was a huge success. Many customers commented that it was such a fantastic thing to see and be a part of.*

*It certainly increased our normal festival weekend footfall & trade beyond recognition and has once again cemented Bedford in the minds of many "out-of towners"*

 Snapshot of customer responses …

*Hi Annalie*

*It was lovely to meet you and see Bedford High Street, playing it’s part at this year’s River Festival. A magnificent display of vehicles and the only time we can sit in a deck chair on the town bridge listening to amazing brass bands. Just being able to walk in the middle of the roads was a novelty for our grandchildren. It was also a great opportunity for town businesses to be part of the river celebrations.*

*Since Covid and recent store closures, shopping in the town had sadly seemed less inviting.  However, having always enjoyed past Fiver Fests, this year we decided to it was time to check out the bargains again, and check out what was on offer.*

*During the two weeks, we had delicious food at both familiar and new places, plus  relaxing glasses of wine.  We also took advantage of the offer at the fishmonger and bought bargain gifts. We have great independent shops in our town, and are looking forward to the next Fiver Fest.*

*We’ve been using VeggieCrush since the start in the Castle Road area and are delighted it’s now doing so well in the High Street.*

*For a sweet treat, whilst not being keen on doughnuts, after having one from SAY at the River Festival, we are now converts.*

*Today we went to the new No 7 Coffee House in Wellington Street and can definitely recommend their coffee.*

*Bedford independents are putting the town on the map.*

*Kind regards*

2. How much business was generated from the river festival for the town centre/local businesses? In footfall and £££. Was there a noticeable impact, essentially.   
  
The footfall analysis above speaks for itself in terms of visitors to the town. Quantitative results from businesses is either confidential or restrictive. We are in touch with businesses but therefore we also run **tactical measurable** promotions to establish a ROI and provide us with qualitative data.

We issued goodie bags throughout the weekend and from the Community Boat which included the **Love Bedford voucher scheme**. This is measured not just in terms of redemption rates but also upselling. The vouchers issued have a lifespan until Christmas (to encourage return visits) so ongoing. In the interim I can confirm that most popular are Boots, Foxy Wings and TK Maxx. Initial engagement with businesses is undertaken before the Festival to ensure business have the chance to ‘sign up’ to the membership if not already involved.

A **Free Prize Draw** was organised to cultivate contacts for the Love Bedford **mailing list** to help facilitate a cost-effective resource to reduce paid-for advertising. That weekend only as this also ran longer i.e. during the summer months, there was a total of 505 entries, catchment profile to be determined.

The **promotion of the Love Bedford website directory** of businesses was particularly relevant to get engagement across the town and raise awareness of town centre businesses. Highlights:

Visitor breakdown – 87.4% NEW Visitors

Pages Visited - /town-centre-gift-vouchers   =    13.04% (most viewed page)

Videos of businesses (both day and evening economy) were also screened on the large screen at Silver Street arranged and staffed by BedfordBID.

Mail outs to both businesses and consumer mailing list is attached for your information.

SM commentary, interactions and new Likes and Followers were up by 150%. A copy of TV coverage is also attached FYI together with our up to date reach of Love Bedford platforms.

Masking of MIA vacant unit. Owing to the detrimental state of the vacant Mercy in Action vacant unit, BedfordBID arranged to ‘mask’ using the promotional banners of the town/website. (Attempts to engage with the landlord/tenants to address have failed and support from those with influence in the town is needed. Team on site.  
  
Goodie bags for the John Bunyan Community Boat x 100  
Photos of busy High Street to be attached.