

the listing

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February 2026
Issue 246

*The
Spences*

WEDDING SPECIAL 2026



**Pages as published in The Listing Royston, The Listing SG8 Villages,
Local Connections Buntingford & Local Connections South of Cambridge,
February 2025**

Full of local suppliers who can help you plan your special day

Choosing Your Wedding Venue

By Rob Bullock robbullockauthor.blogspot.com

Your wedding day is one to remember forever and choosing the right venue can make it perfect.

A large portion of your wedding budget could be taken up by the cost of the wedding venue depending on whether they cater for the event, and with many couples using life savings, it is vital to choose the perfect venue for you.

Factors to consider

Budget and availability

Most people have set budgets when it comes to how much they can pay for a wedding venue so it is vital that from initial communications you discover if you can afford a particular venue. And, almost as important, if you have set dates in mind you need to find out if a venue is available before a decision is made.

What is included

Many venues will offer catering services and bars, some will offer entertainment and accommodation, many will offer this as part of a total package, but some don't so make sure you are aware of what is included and what is not and what you might have to organise yourself.

Is the venue licensed for civil ceremonies?

Many larger wedding venues are licensed for civil ceremonies, but some are not so if you

want to be married at a venue this must be clarified.

Recommendations

A good venue should be able to supply testimonies from people that have had their wedding there. Get contact details, speak with previous customers and ask around amongst family and friends to find out if anyone has any experience of a venue, as a customer or guest.

Size, location and facilities

If you are planning a big wedding, you need a venue that can cater for it, if you are planning something more intimate a smaller venue might be best. The location of a venue is important not only for any photos but for friends and family that might be attending and the facilities that are available are important. Some wedding venues have beautiful gardens that offer photographers stunning locations for wedding pictures.

Restrictions

Before you book a wedding venue, finding out if there are any restrictions will save much disappointment later. Does the venue allow customers to choose a theme or décor for weddings or not. Do they allow pets. Some want their beloved pets to be part of the



wedding ceremony, but if pets are not allowed inside the wedding venue this could be a drawback.

Homework, check lists and questions

The most successful weddings are often the best thought out. Think about what kind of wedding you want and what kind of wedding you don't. Ask around and find out where other people have got married and what they thought of the venue. Do your homework and research. Start on the internet and make calls. Visit venues, go for a drink, have a meal, stay the night. This will allow you to make one of the biggest decisions of your life in an informed way.

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Your wedding day is a moment unlike any other - a day where every detail tells your story, from the dress and the venue to the carefully chosen menu.

And at the heart of it all lies the wedding ring, a symbol of the love and devotion you share.

Choosing the perfect ring is a decision that deserves thought and care, for it is more than a piece of jewellery - it is a daily reminder of your promises, your bond, and the journey you are beginning together.

At HC Jewellers, we understand the magic of this day and the significance of the ring that will accompany it.

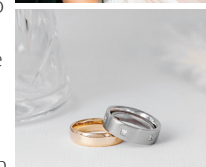
That's why we offer a curated collection of luxury wedding rings in platinum, white, yellow, and rose gold - each designed to capture the beauty of your love.

Whether timelessly classic or subtly distinctive, every piece is a celebration of

your story, crafted to be treasured for a lifetime. Whether you're drawn to the understated beauty of a classic gold band, the brilliance of diamond-set designs, or a bespoke wedding ring crafted to your vision, our collection offers something for every taste and budget. For those seeking the perfect engagement ring, our online design experience lets you create a truly personal piece - choosing the mount, style, and diamond's size and quality to reflect your story.

Have a question or need advice? The HC Jewellers team would be happy to help - please get in touch

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Choosing a Wedding Photographer

By Rob Bullock robbullockauthor.blogspot.com

Good wedding photographs help you cherish the memories of your special day, so it is important to do your research and choose the right photographer for you.

Set your budget

As with many aspects of planning your big day, how much you can spend will determine who you choose to take your photos. But it is always worth asking if someone can be flexible.

Consider the style you want

Do you want classic pictures, or perhaps candid photos that capture the spontaneity of the day are more to your taste? Are you interested in a theme? Perhaps you and your partner have a lifestyle and want your wedding photographs to reflect or capture this.

There are three main types of photography and once you've considered what you would like, you can shop around to find out what particular photographers offer, some are generalists, but others offer specific styles.

Traditional or formal wedding photography

is what most think of when thinking about wedding photography. It features classic set poses of the happy couple and group shots of the wedding party.

Whilst this used to be the most popular style in the UK, this style of photography can disrupt your big day and take away some of the spontaneity, but the end results

and finished photographs will look fantastic.

Reportage photography has more of a candid feel to it as the photographer subtly mingles capturing you and your guests spontaneously. Many couples choose this style of photography because it can tell the real story of your day, the joy, the laughter, the tears, any little glitches that you will laugh about later.

Contemporary photography features more dramatic and unique shots. Couples choose this style of photography if they want an artistic or themed approach to the photos.

How to choose the right person

Research is key. Begin by looking at a website, set up a meeting with the photographer and go and see their portfolio. Recommendations are worth their weight in gold, so ask around family, friends or work colleagues. Once you have selected a professional ask them to give you details of previous customers and get in touch with them. Don't worry about offending the photographer, most professionals will be happy to stand by their body of work and pass on details of previous clients.

Book an engagement shoot

Rather than being the photos of your actual engagement this is more of a trial run for the big day, and it's a great way to get to know your photographer, get used to them and practice what shots might look best.

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Valentine's Day Tips and Ideas By Emma Russell

Here are a few ways you can celebrate your love this Valentine's Day, and show you care.

Valentine's cards can be shop-bought or homemade, simple or extravagant, as long as they show a bit of thoughtfulness and care.

Chocolates and flowers are the most popular gifts for Valentine's Day. Florists will be happy to help you choose a more personalised bouquet or plant. A box of chocolates or treats can mean so much more if it's bespoke and most confectioners, bakers, or sweet shops can help you put together something truly special.

Booking a table for two in their favourite restaurant is always a winner. Book well in advance, you could even pre-order the meal if you know their favourite dishes. If your sweetheart is a more adventurous diner, try somewhere new to

make the occasion exciting for both of you.

Cooking a meal can be a great alternative. If you are proficient in the kitchen, take charge and cook something you know they will enjoy. If you're not so confident, buy some provisions from a local market or delicatessen. Keeping things simple is the key to success; pre-prepared starters and desserts will give you time to concentrate on the main course. Alternatively, organising and cooking a meal together can be a lot of fun!

A surprise date or getaway takes a lot of planning and thought, but it needn't cost a fortune. You could organise an outdoor adventure, hiking, biking, or exploring somewhere new. Find a natural landscape, a park, or a stretch of coastline to discover. If the weather is warm enough, you could

pack a picnic and enjoy some romantic time in the great outdoors. If your loved one prefers more urban getaways with cultural activities, you could spend some quality time in an unfamiliar city or town and investigate it together. Most places have museums and art galleries, shows, and events that you can research and book online. Make sure you take photos to capture all those new memories.

You could **create a photo book** of a special time together, this romantic memento makes a really thoughtful Valentine's gift. Most local photographic shops can help you put together an album or choose an image to frame for your loved one.

Whatever you decide to do this Valentine's Day, if you put some thought into it you can show your loved one how much you really care.



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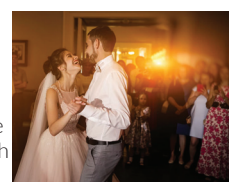
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Business Profile

Weddings at The Woodman Inn

The Listing interviewed Robyn Arber, the Event Manager for Nutwood Pubs who oversees all weddings at The Woodman Inn.

The Woodman Inn has three licensed spaces at the pub, and can cater for a range of receptions and weddings from 20 to 150 people.

How long does it usually take to plan a wedding, and do you take short-notice bookings?

Most weddings take 12-24 months to plan comfortably, but I've also planned beautiful weddings in as little as four months. With good organisation, shorter timelines can still feel relaxed and enjoyable.

What planning services do you offer?

I offer a hands-on service from the initial enquiry right through to managing the wedding day itself. This includes planning meetings, ideas and inspiration, guidance on styling and décor, and running the day on site.

How do you understand a couple's vision?

I always meet couples early on. Face-to-face conversations help me understand their personalities, priorities and style, allowing me to create a day that truly reflects them.

What do you enjoy most about wedding planning?

The first meeting, hearing couples' ideas, and the wedding day itself - seeing everything come together seamlessly.



Robyn Arber, the Event Manager for Nutwood Pubs who oversees all weddings at The Woodman Inn



How do you help with budgets?

I offer flexible packages, practical money-saving advice, and recommend trusted suppliers who deliver great value.

What sets you apart?

Clear communication, genuine care, and a calm, organised approach. I treat every wedding as if it were my own, ensuring it feels personal, relaxed and beautifully run.

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Your Wedding Cake

Top 5 questions to ask when sourcing your Wedding Cake Designer

Where will my cake be made and how fresh will it be?

With many bakers working from home, it is important to find out where your cake will be made and if all precautions are being taken to ensure food safety. Or if you're choosing a baker with a shop front, they will normally encourage you to visit behind the scenes in their bakery so you can see where your cake will be made.

It's also important to ask how far in advance your cake will be made. Many bakeries batch make cakes and freeze layers, whilst there's nothing wrong with this approach, if you prefer a freshly baked sponge you can enquire about this detail for reassurance. A good time frame is 2-3 days prior to your Wedding.

Will you personally deliver and set up the cake and how will you transport it?

Wedding Cake pricing does differ from celebration cake pricing largely due to the structure and science behind the cake set up. Historically Wedding Cakes were fruit cakes with marzipan and Royal Icing, meaning structure wasn't an issue due to density. Nowadays with tall elegant tiers iced with fresh buttercream, stability is key. An experienced baker will know how to dowel and support each tier to ensure it can withstand heat (within reason) and it being moved around for cake cutting later in the evening. Wedding Cake Specialists may also have a 'Cake Safe' to transport your cake. A special box with a food safe pole that goes through the entire cake and out the bottom

of the box, for the ultimate secure transportation of your cake.

Can I try the cake before, do you offer Wedding Consultations?

It is really important to meet your Wedding Cake Designer either in person or over Zoom and try the cake. Most bakers will provide samples in varying flavours for you to try. The meeting allows for you both to ask questions and for a design to be discussed and developed. A full quotation is often provided after the meeting.

Have you supplied a cake at my wedding venue before?

Not always essential but good to know if they are a recommended supplier or have experience at setting up a cake at your venue. If the team know them well, the process will be smooth. Or find out if they will get in touch with them to provide insurance and allergen info and confirm delivery and set up timings.

How many wedding cakes have you made and are you fully registered?

Your Wedding Cake is an important part of your day and something that you will likely invest in. So it is really important to ensure that your Wedding Cake Designer is experienced and fully registered. You may wonder why a cake can be expensive. But this is mostly down to the expertise a baker acquires through making many Wedding Cakes over time. It's a highly skilled profession and it is important to understand their skill level to ensure your cake is not only stunning to look at but more importantly tastes amazing for you and your guests.



Kelly's Kitchen is based in Royston with their bakery located in Bassingbourn Cambridgeshire. Kelly hand designs and makes every Wedding Cake providing a full Wedding Cake Tasting Consultation in the bakery. Please feel free to read their Google Reviews for couple's experiences. Download their Wedding Cake Guide: kellyscakekitchen.co.uk/wedding-cakes



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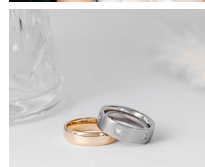
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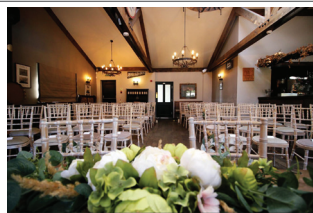
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www.woodmannuthampstead.com



Robyn Arber, the Event Manager for Nutwood Pubs who oversees all weddings at The Woodman Inn



Valentine's Day Ideas

Here are a few ways you can celebrate your love this Valentine's Day, and show you care.

Valentine's cards can be shop-bought or homemade, simple or extravagant, as long as they show a bit of thoughtfulness and care.

Chocolates and flowers are the most popular gifts for Valentine's Day. Florists will be happy to help you choose a more personalised bouquet or plant. A box of chocolates or treats can mean so much more if it's bespoke and most confectioners, bakers, or sweet shops can help you put together something truly special.

Booking a table for two in their favourite restaurant is always a winner. Book well in advance, you could even pre-order the meal if you know their favourite dishes. If your sweetheart is a more adventurous diner, try somewhere new to make the occasion exciting for both of you.

Cooking a meal can be a great alternative. If you are proficient in the kitchen, take charge and cook something you know they will enjoy. If you're not so confident, buy some provisions from a local market or delicatessen. Keeping things simple is the key to success; pre-prepared starters and desserts will give you time to concentrate on the main course. Alternatively, organising and cooking a meal together can be a lot of fun!



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Your honeymoon is more than just a holiday - it's the first adventure of married life together, and at Premier Travel Royston, we understand just how important it is to get every detail right.

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knowledge that we're here before, during and after you travel. And with our Big Travel Sale on now, there's never been a better time to book your dream honeymoon and make the most of fantastic savings.

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Business Profile

Choosing a Wedding Photographer

By Rob Bullock
robbullockauthor.blogspot.com

Good wedding photographs help you cherish the memories of your special day, so it is important to do your research and choose the right photographer for you.

Set your budget

As with many aspects of planning your big day, how much you can spend will determine who you choose to take your photos. But it is always worth asking if someone can be flexible.

Consider the style you want

Do you want classic pictures, or perhaps candid photos that capture the spontaneity of the day are more to your taste? Are you interested in a theme? Perhaps you and your partner have a lifestyle and want your wedding photographs to reflect or capture this.

There are three main types of photography and once you've considered what you would like, you can shop around to find out what particular photographers offer, some are generalists, but others offer specific styles.

Traditional or formal wedding photography

is what most think of when thinking about wedding photography. It features classic set poses of the happy couple and group shots of the wedding party. Whilst this used to be the most popular style in the UK, this style of photography can disrupt your big day and take away some of the spontaneity, but the end results and finished photographs will look fantastic.

Reportage photography has more of a candid feel to it as the photographer subtly mingles capturing you and your guests spontaneously. Many couples choose this style of photography because it can tell the real story of your day, the joy, the laughter, the tears, any little glitches that you will laugh about later.

Contemporary photography features more dramatic and unique shots. Couples choose this style of photography if they want an artistic or themed approach to the photos.

How to choose the right person

Research is key. Begin by looking at a website, set up a meeting with the photographer and go and see their portfolio. Recommendations are worth their weight in gold, so ask around family, friends or work colleagues. Once you have selected a professional ask them to give you details of previous customers and get in touch with them. Don't worry about offending the photographer, most professionals will be happy to stand by their body of work and pass on details of previous clients.

Book an engagement shoot

Rather than being the photos of your actual engagement this is more of a trial run for the big day, and it's a great way to get to know your photographer, get used to them and practice what shots might look best.

Easy Chocolate Cookies

Sometimes the easiest creations are the most delicious, and as far as baking goes, chocolate chip cookies combine simplicity with tantalising taste. The perfect activity for Half Term or to treat your loved one on Valentine's Day!

Ingredients

250g butter, softened
350g light soft brown sugar
2 large eggs
350g self-raising flour
100g cocoa powder
200g chocolate chips, or chopped chocolate chunks, or 400g for optional dipping (choose your favourite type)

Method

Step 1

Beat the butter and sugar together with an optional pinch of sea salt in a bowl until light and fluffy, then beat in the eggs one at a time. Sift over the flour and cocoa powder and beat into the butter mix, then fold through the chocolate chips. The mix can be made up to 2 days ahead and chilled or frozen for a month, or used straight away.

Step 2

To bake, heat oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. If the mix is at room temperature, place evenly spaced spoonfuls on parchment-lined baking sheets, allowing 2 tbsp for each cookie. If the mix is fridge cold, you can roll it into 40g balls before baking. The balls can be frozen and the biscuits baked from frozen, but they'll need a few minutes more. Bake for 12-15mins until spread out and crusty around the outside. Leave to cool slightly and enjoy warm, or leave to cool completely and eat cold. The biscuits will keep in a tin for three days.



Step 3

As an optional extra, the biscuits can be dipped in chocolate. To do this, melt your chosen type of chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water or in the microwave. Leave to cool a little, then dip half of each biscuit in the chocolate and leave them on parchment-lined trays somewhere cool to set. Again, the dipped biscuits will keep for up to three days in a tin or lidded plastic container.

Local Markets

Royston Market

Every Wed and Sat, 8am-3pm
facebook.com/RoystonMarket
Royston Market Square, SG8 9JS

Orwell Pannier Market

Saturday 7th February, 10am - 12noon
Orwell Village Hall SG8 5QN

New this month - Hannah and her wildlife photographs and Nicola with her Tropic Skincare range.

Visit our regular 'Food Hall' stallholders: Highbury Farm lamb and sheepskin products, Ann Borakis with her Greek Goodies, The Honest Fig with speciality cheeses, Indian snacks, bread, cakes, pies, pickles, artisan liqueurs and game

A great selection of craft stalls - including Gillian's amazing Pet Portraits, handmade designer jewellery, cards & stationery, knitted items, cushions and much more.

Meet your friends at our tea room for hot drinks, cakes and our famous bacon rolls!

This month all profits will go to Orwell History Society.

Occasions for Less Closing Down Sale



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FROM £5

SHOES & BAGS
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Tel: 01763 244073
info@occasionsforless.co.uk
www.occasionsforless.co.uk

SONA - Southern Asian Cuisine

Located in the heart of Buntingford on the High Street sits SONA, a restaurant & takeaway built on love, family, and the belief that food should bring people together.

Serving refined South Asian cuisine, SONA was created with one clear purpose: to make every guest feel welcomed, valued, and loved. SONA serves beautifully spiced, richly flavoured, and utterly irresistible food.

Food at SONA is always fresh, bespoke, and made to measure. We pride ourselves on listening to our customers and adapting dishes to individual tastes and dietary needs, whether that means adjusting spice levels to suit every palate or creating something entirely tailored. We ensure no request is ever too much. Our extensive vegan offering is a key part of our menu, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and thoughtful cooking for all lifestyles.

Our signature dish, the Gunpowder, captures the soul of SONA with succulent chicken, lamb, and sheekh kebab cooked in an urban-inspired sauce, delicately spiced with garam

masala and finished to your preferred heat. We recommend anyone to try it.

SONA is led by me, Abdul, a father of three, and family sits at the heart of everything we do. Alongside two business partners who share the same values, we've created a place where warmth, service, and respect come first. We deliver to most areas and never shy away from any order.

This February, we're inviting you to try our food with a special offer - see our advert on the back cover of the magazine. Let us cook for you, care for you, and show you what heartfelt hospitality truly tastes like. We gave the name SONA because it means 'Gold' not the kind you wear, but the kind you cherish; at SONA, our customers are our gold!

SONA, 35 High Street, Buntingford, SG9 9AD
01763 662909 www.sona-buntingford.co.uk



SONA owner Abdul, pictured with his daughter

Business Profile

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07833 757 229

Laurence@theluxurybrand.co.uk
www.theluxurybrand.co.uk

Weddings at The Woodman Inn

The Listing interviewed Robyn Arber, the Event Manager for Nutwood Pubs who oversees all weddings at The Woodman Inn.

The Woodman Inn has three licensed spaces at the pub, and can cater for a range of receptions and weddings from 20 to 150 people.

How long does it usually take to plan a wedding, and do you take short-notice bookings?

Most weddings take 12–24 months to plan comfortably, but I've also planned beautiful weddings in as little as four months. With good organisation, shorter timelines can still feel relaxed and enjoyable.

What planning services do you offer?

I offer a hands-on service from the initial enquiry right through to managing the wedding day itself. This includes planning meetings, ideas and inspiration, guidance on styling and décor, and running the day on site.

How do you understand a couple's vision?

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I can guide you through light hearted lessons to take your first steps to your special song with pride, happiness and confidence, creating a memory to cherish forever.

Jayne, IconDanceLessons, 07747 153 133

Jayne@icondancelessons.com

www.icondancelessons.com

Business Profile

TH THOMAS HUTTLESTONE
vocals / trumpet

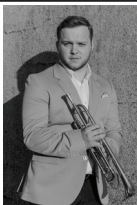
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Choosing Your Wedding Venue

By Rob Bullock robbullockauthor.blogspot.com

Your wedding day is one to remember forever and choosing the right venue can make it perfect.

A large portion of your wedding budget could be taken up by the cost of the wedding venue depending on whether they cater for the event, and with many couples using life savings, it is vital to choose the perfect venue for you.

Factors to consider

Budget and availability

Most people have set budgets when it comes to how much they can pay for a wedding venue so it is vital that from initial communications you discover if you can afford a particular venue. And, almost as important, if you have set dates in mind you need to find out if a venue is available before a decision is made.

What is included

Many venues will offer catering services and bars, some will offer entertainment and accommodation, many will offer this as part of a total package, but some don't so make sure you are aware of what is included and what is not and what you might have to organise yourself.

Is the venue licensed for civil ceremonies?

Many larger wedding venues are licensed for civil ceremonies, but some are not so if you want to be married at a venue this must be clarified.

Recommendations

A good venue should be able to supply testimonies from people that have had their

wedding there. Get contact details, speak with previous customers and ask around amongst family and friends to find out if anyone has any experience of a venue, as a customer or guest.

Size, location and facilities

If you are planning a big wedding, you need a venue that can cater for it, if you are planning something more intimate a smaller venue might be best. The location of a venue is important not only for any photos but for friends and family that might be attending and the facilities that are available are important. Some wedding venues have beautiful gardens that offer photographers stunning locations for wedding pictures.

Restrictions

Before you book a wedding venue, finding out if there are any restrictions will save much disappointment later. Does the venue allow customers to choose a theme or décor for weddings or not. Do they allow pets. Some want their beloved pets to be part of the wedding ceremony, but if pets are not allowed inside the wedding venue this could be a drawback.

Homework, check lists and questions

The most successful weddings are often the best thought out. Think about what kind of wedding you want and what kind of wedding you don't. Ask around and find out where other people have got married and what they thought of the venue. Do your homework and research. Start on the internet and make calls. Visit venues, go for a drink, have a meal, stay the night. This will allow you to make one of the biggest decisions of your life in an informed way.

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From the elegantly simple to the highly choreographed, your wish is my command! It can be as easy as you like and still look amazing. Every dance is bespoke, and tailored to suit you.

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