

Wheathampstead Magazine



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February 2026



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WELCOME

February can be a funny old month as it's stopped being a time to say happy new year, but it doesn't really feel close to springtime yet, so it's really neither winter nor spring! Having said that, February does have a couple of traditions that many people get involved with as it offers all the romance of Valentine's Day as well as the scrummy tastes of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. We asked local people about their thoughts on both of these long-established traditions and there's a link to our favourite pancake recipe too. We also take a look at all the many benefits of living in the countryside (particularly Wheathampstead) and review local house prices, the forecast for property prices for the coming year and the changes across 2025 too. We find out a little about pedal bike security and if you're stuck indoors because it's still a bit chilly and rainy outside and fancy a bit of DIY, you could take a look at our take on the topic.

What's On still seems to have plenty of events to review that are happening across our area or within easy reach.

Have a great month!

Eve X
eve@minimagazines.co.uk

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Dentist: Marford Road 01582 833 408

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Electricity Emergency: 0800 404 090

Power Cuts: 105

Healthline: 111

Police non emergency: 101

Parish Council: 01582 832541

County Council: 0300 123 4040

Local Pharmacy: 01582 832102

Help Lines

Mind: 0845 766 0163

Advice for Mental Health Issues

The Samaritans: Freephone 116123

Confidential non-judgemental emotional support

Alcoholics Anonymous:

0845 769 7555

Stroke helpline: 0845 303 3100

Advice from the Stroke Association

Age Concern: 0800 00 99 66

Frank: 0800 77 66 00

Advice about drugs from professional advisers

Beating Eating Disorders:

0845 634 1414

Cruse Day by Day: 0844 477 9400

Help and support for people who are bereaved

Macmillan CancerLine:

0808 808 2020

Autism Helpline: 0845 070 4004

We've heard...

That the Hospice of St Francis is launching 'Respite for Good' this February – a new chargeable service offering short-term care for people who rely on family carers. It's designed to give family carers the break they deserve while ensuring their loved ones receive exceptional care in a safe and supportive environment. Four onsite rooms will be available for booking periods of up to two weeks. Contact The Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted for more details.

Closure of The Hill

Between 24 – 27th February, The Hill will be closed so that work can clear the gullies and ascertain the damage to the underlying drainage pipes etc. According to the Parish Council, both The Hill and The High Street have been examined. The team will endeavour to clear the High Street blocked gullies and investigate why pressure builds up in the central drainage pipe to the river during these 4 days.

Did you know

February is a great time of year to rethink and revisit any New Year's resolutions that you may have made a couple of months ago - have you stuck to your plans or have you ignored everything and just gone back to the old you? Either way it's ok, but it's worth reminding yourself that you are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

Thought for February

Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind, instead, be led by the dreams in your heart - because, the only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.

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Love, Romance and Sticky Sweetness

There are a couple of notable dates in February that are predominantly based in English traditions and steeped in love and sweetness! But do we still practice these traditions, do we all still keep up and get involved as we used to, or at least as our predecessors once did, or is it all just too commercial these days? Wheathampstead Magazine went out and about to find out. But first, a little about the love, the romance and the sweetness that contributes to these old favorites...

Is Love in the Air?

Of course, we are talking about Valentine's Day which brims with possibilities for romance. Consider a candlelit dinner at home, stargazing, a dance night in your living room, or even a nostalgic visit to places significant in your relationship. Many people like to eat out and arrange to kiss over a romantic dinner and some exchange gifts too. But, remember, it's the shared moments, not the grand gestures, that kindle romance.(although there's never anything wrong with kissing!)

Valentine's Day, also known as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is a celebration observed on February 14th each year and is celebrated in many countries around the world.

A popular account of Saint Valentine states that he was imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry and for ministering to Christians, who were persecuted under the Roman Empire. According to legend, during his imprisonment, he healed the daughter



of his jailer and apparently, before his execution, he wrote her a letter signed, 'Your Valentine' as a farewell.



Valentine's Day symbols that are used today include the heart-shaped outline, doves and the figure of the winged Cupid. These days, Valentine flowers, gifts and cards remain unsigned by the sender and today it's possibly more a sign of affection than love - although perhaps we *Continued on page 11*



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will never know!

Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday and is the sweetness part of things. Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, so the date varies from year to year. This year, Shrove Tuesday will fall on Tuesday 17th February. History tells us that it was really all about using up eggs and flour before the fast and so making pancakes seems to be the perfect way to do that. A proper pancake is a batter made from eggs, flour and milk whisked up until bubbles form. A thin layer of the batter is fried and flipped over after a short period. A traditional English pancake is very thin and is served as soon as it sets and begins to brown in the pan and is usually served with golden syrup, lemon juice and/or caster sugar and various items of fruit can be added too. See our recipe at: www.wheathampsteadmagazine.co.uk/pancake We were keen to know just who if romance is still alive and well in Wheathampstead and who likes pancakes and if most people still like to get involved in these traditions.

We spoke to Mr & Mrs T who explained: "We enjoy pancakes, and yes with all the trimmings and we always add some raspberries - delicious. So yes, we always have pancakes on Pancake Day and on plenty of other days too! Mrs T confided that she usually got some flowers for valentine's and a box of chocolates to share too."

Mr P said: "Oh yes, we always go out somewhere nice for Valentine's. I've actually already booked a table. My wife will get some special chocolates for me that we share when we get home, and I'll get some flowers for her. Mmm not bothered about Pancake Day, too sweet and too fiddly."

Mrs H told us: "I am always treated to flowers or chocolates or both, which I love. Then we get together with the children for pancakes with syrup and lemon on Pancake Day. Not all that good for the diet, so naughty but nice. So yes, I love both traditions and long may they continue."

Miss B said: "I love Valentine's. I'm going out with my boyfriend, I've bought him a present too, I'm so looking forward to it."

As usual, it was great to chat to local people to get their views. Whatever you have planned on Valentine's and/or Pancake Day, above all make sure that you enjoy yourselves!

Local Fencing

The locally based Paul Davis Fencing Academy is celebrating a major achievement after seven of its athletes were selected for the European Fencing Championships, taking place in Tbilisi, Georgia, this February.

The selections are particularly significant, with Academy fencers making up three of the four athletes in the Women's Under 20 team and two of the four athletes in the Men's Under 17 team, underlining the Academy's growing impact at national and international level.

The European Championship is the most prestigious event in European fencing, offering young athletes vital international competition experience and, in some years, opportunities to earn qualification points towards the World Championships and Olympic Games.



Aren't We Lucky?

I say that because we live in a lovely part of the world that offers vast amounts of countryside and open spaces. I was brought up in a densely populated London suburb, full of houses, streets and people and I didn't really know any different until we moved to Hertfordshire and even then, I really didn't appreciate the countryside at all until I was much older.

Now I know that living in the countryside offers numerous benefits which focus on an improved quality of life, enhanced well-being, more space, as well as a strong sense of community.

Rural areas generally have cleaner air and less noise pollution, which is linked to a lower risk of respiratory issues and reduced stress levels. The peaceful surroundings promote a slower, more mindful pace of life, which can improve mental health and lead to better sleep quality.

There's also easy access to nature, such as walking trails, fields, and woodlands which can encourage a more active, healthier lifestyle. Connection to nature and outdoors activities can include things

like hiking, cycling, and gardening. The ease and closeness of all our green spaces is great for both physical fitness and mental rejuvenation.

Getting out of densely populated towns and cities usually means that properties typically offer more indoor and outdoor space for your money compared to urban areas, often featuring larger gardens or land. This provides greater privacy and room for families and pets to enjoy the outdoors safely.

With more land, there is also greater opportunity for self-sufficiency, such as growing your own fruit and veg or maybe keeping chickens which can reduce living costs.

It seems that rural areas generally report lower crime rates than cities, which contributes to that feeling of greater security for residents and families.

Smaller towns and villages like Wheathampstead often have close-knit communities where neighbours know each other and social ties run deeper. This environment can foster a strong sense of belonging and support through local events,

markets, and social clubs and groups. Wheathampstead has a whole wealth of such clubs and groups many of which are detailed across the pages of this magazine. So, I'm happy to be living in the countryside and happily concur to the notion that we are lucky to do so.

Wheathampstead Homes

Wheathampstead has been listed among the best eleven locations in the south-east, as well as one of the top 72 places in the whole of the UK. The village, with a population of about 6,500, was first settled around 50 BC and was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.

When it comes to homes and housing, according to various comments, blogs and updates from building societies and estate agents, the feeling is that the UK housing market in February 2026 is projected as a steady, stable period with modest house price growth (around 1-4% annually).



Apparently, there's a significant shift from recent volatility, driven by falling mortgage rates, improving affordability, and a potential "spring bounce" fuelled by pent-up demand. The pundits say that we can expect a calmer, more predictable market, with potential government incentives and

reforms expected to support the market. According to Rightmove, house prices in Wheathampstead have an overall average of £808,181 over the last year.

The majority of properties sold in Wheathampstead during the last year were detached properties, selling for an average price of £1,134,026. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £730,423, with terraced properties fetching £541,727. Overall, the historical sold prices in Wheathampstead over the last year were 9% up on the previous year and 8% down on the 2022 peak of £876,896.

Don't Go to A&E

The NHS has warned that those arriving at emergency departments with minor illnesses or injuries may be redirected to GP practices, pharmacies, or other local services instead.

In a statement, health leaders advised: "If you are unwell or injured and not sure where to go, please visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111 first. This saves you time and effort, and is the best way to ensure NHS staff can treat you effectively if needed."

Health services in Hertfordshire are under increased strain due to higher demand in recent months, including the impact of flu, winter bugs, and respiratory illnesses being reported across the area.

Alternative care options

For illnesses and injuries that don't require emergency treatment, the NHS suggests taking advantage of Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) or minor injuries units where available. NHS 111 can provide advice about accessing urgent care.

Other options include:

Contacting NHS 111 for assistance and referrals to urgent dental care
Visiting the Integrated Care Board website for urgent mental health support information: *Continued on page 15*

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Finding tips on staying well and caring for others during cold weather via the ICS website

These services aim to help patients access appropriate care without waiting at overwhelmed A&E departments.

As challenges persist, residents are encouraged to plan ahead and use NHS 111 as their first point of contact when unsure about where to go for care or treatment. Hospitals across Hertfordshire are urging people not to attend A&E unless they have serious or life-threatening conditions, due to significant pressures on health services.

On Yer Bike

It seems that there has been a bit of an increase in pedal bike thefts in Herts so we thought it would be a good idea to remind pedal bike owners about a few steps which can be taken to deter thefts

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from taking place and prevent you from becoming a victim of crime.

Safety recommendations include using two quality locks, ideally one being a D-lock, and securing both the frame and wheels to a secure cycle stand.

New Compassion ART Café

Rennie Grove Peace is bringing its Compassion ART Café to Hemel Hempstead - creating a warm, welcoming space for anyone who has experienced bereavement or feels isolated due to illness. Launching late January, the café will run on the third Wednesday of the month at Liberty Tea Rooms & Community Hub, Hemel Hempstead. These free drop-in sessions offer a gentle opportunity to share a cup of tea, meet others, and explore creativity through simple arts and crafts. Whether you're looking for a friendly chat, a quiet moment with a cuppa, or a chance to express yourself through painting, collage, or other creative activities, you'll find a relaxed space where everyone is welcome. No booking is required, just come along. Find out more on the Rennie Grove Peace website at <https://renniegrovepeace.org/>

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Fancy Doing it Yourself?

DIY is the well used abbreviation for do-it-yourself: the activity of decorating or repairing your home, or making things



for your home yourself, rather than paying someone else to do it for you.

Whilst it's a pretty straightforward-sounding concept, in fairness, whether you love it or hate it can rather depend on whether or not you are any good at it. Most do it yourself projects need a certain amount of skill as well as patience. DIY might conjure up totally different images for different people, because really, it can be about so many things.

Many people use the word 'DIY' when working on older things - such as furniture or clothes - so that the worn-out items are given new life again. This way, you can be eco-friendly by practicing DIY, as you help

extend the life of existing products instead of buying new ones.

The DIY label gets added to a lot of projects, and basically, everything from patching a hole in a wall yourself to hanging wallpaper or painting up an old cupboard counts as a DIY project. DIY goes beyond that, since it can probably be applied to things like cutting your own hair, sewing your own clothes, decorating a cake, managing your own investments and so much more.

There's a TV programme that I've seen which is based on rummaging around at local tips to find something that the shows presenter can renovate or completely re-invent, often in a rather innovative and

quirky way. The items always seem to sell for relatively large sums of money which goes back to the original owner after costs are deducted, so it just shows that there is a market for it.

If you do decide to do the task or create or make something yourself with no direct help from an expert, you do have that



need to do something that you would normally pay someone else to do for you.

Personally, when I think about DIY projects, my mind goes to home improvement tasks.

Things like painting, refurbishing a piece of old furniture, putting up shelves and repairing things that need

maintenance. But, if you are someone that's into arts and crafts, in my opinion, that doesn't really fall under the DIY umbrella, mainly because you are creating something rather than buying something someone else has purpose made. So love it or hate it, let's just say that DIY can be quite satisfying and you might just pick up some new skills too.



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Clubs and Groups

Tennis

We are a friendly Tennis Club with plenty of opportunities to play social and competitive tennis. We offer a comprehensive coaching programme for Adults and Children from the age of 4. Members and non-members welcome. For more information pop down to Club night on Wednesday evening, or to Sunday morning social. Alternatively check out: www.wltc.org.uk or email us on: wheatltc@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you on court soon.

Thursday Club

friendly, volunteer-run companionship and support Club for Wheathampstead residents who are over 60 and unable to access other activities without support. The Club meets every Thursday from 10am-2pm. Tea/Coffee is provided upon arrival, followed by a home cooked meal and then we finish with some form of entertainment. Transport to and from the Mead Hall can be arranged. To find out more, or if you have any questions, call Val Hughes on 01582 629682 or Michael Corley on 01582 833018.

The Village Surgeries PG.

The objective of the group is to contribute wherever possible to the health improvements in Wheathampstead and Harpenden. We are now arranging monthly medical talks on-line. There are also newsletters 4 times a year where members can gain information about local initiatives. We are always looking for new members and it is free to join and participate. To be included and receive the newsletter and get details of the talks please send a request to chair@thevillagesurgeriesppg.co.uk

Archery

Wheathampstead Archery club was founded in 1956, and has about 70 members. Always happy to welcome newcomers; beginners or experienced. Beginners will need to complete

a beginner course run by our Archery GB qualified club coaches. There is a Junior Section for under-18s, but the minimum age is 10.<http://wheathampsteadarchery.org.uk/>

Forging Friendship Club

Affiliated to the Men's Sheds Association, this new club has recently formed in Wheathampstead. Members meet socially and form friendships while facilitating creativity, passing on skills and learning from each other. Meet weekly on Wednesday at 10am to 12 pm in the Old Forge building near the entrance to the Meads. To join or find out more email: forgingfriendshipsclub@gmail.com

Wheathampstead Baby & Toddler Group

We are a relaxed and friendly group for 0-4 year-olds and their parents and carers, run by parent-volunteers. We provide toys, craft, music, snacks, hot drinks and the chance to get to know other local people. We meet every Friday during term time, 9:45-11:15am at The Memorial Hall on Marford Road.

Find us on Facebook or contact wheathampsteadtoddlergroup@gmail.com

Wheathampstead Community Group (WCG)

WCG seeks to support anyone in the Parish of Wheathampstead who is looking for assistance. If you or anyone that you know needs help, or you wish to volunteer for WCG, please call 07539 176481.

If you need transport to hospital or the doctor, please call 07918 136870.

www.wheathampsteadwcg.org
email: Secretary@wheathampsteadwcg.org

Kimpton Bowls Club

Bowling for everyone- Come and try bowls.
'Beginners Welcome' *Continued on page 28*

Useful Contacts

Emotional & practical support

www.hertshelp.net

03001234044

Health advice and information

www.nhs.uk/coroavirus

Local council services

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus

Domestic abuse

www.hertssunflower.org

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse helpline

08 088 088 088

Financial Advice

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/benefits

Citizens Advice

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National Debtline

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Volunteering

www.volunteering.org.uk

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Business Group

Wheathampstead Businesses (known as WEB) has a mission to Promote, Protect & Support local businesses and the local community. BILLY the Bee is our mascot promoting Buy It Locally. Twice monthly networking meetings provide an opportunity to collaborate, learn from each other and gain customers. For more details contact Ginny Cooper, Chairman: chair@wheathampsteadbusinesses.co.uk

Cricket

Wheathampstead Cricket Club has five adult teams and an expanding colts section. Cricket is played on Nomansland Common on Saturday and Sunday throughout the season, with occasional mid-week and evening fixtures. WCC really is a club on the up and we now have some of the best cricket facilities in the county. New players and spectators are always welcome: www.wheathampsteadcc.hitscricket.com

Wheathampstead Dramatic Society

The Dramatic Society is always looking for new members who would like to join this friendly group. For information about our next planned production visit our website: www.wheathampsteaddramaticsociety.co.uk

Wheathampstead & District Preservation Society

The aims of the group are to protect what's best about the village, make the best use of its assets, object to inappropriate planning applications and take part in community initiatives. The more members we have, the

louder is our voice. To join, please see our website: www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk or call 01582 833789.

Mead Quilters

We are a long established, forward looking and friendly quilting and patchwork group who meet at the Mead Hall in East Lane, Wheathampstead, AL4 8BP.

We meet on the first Tuesday morning of each month 10.00-12.noon, and the 3rd Tuesday evening 7.30-9.00pm. Visitors are welcome at both sessions. For further information see our website www.meadquilters.org:

Wheathampstead W.I.

Lively, interesting and varied meetings. Every 2nd Wednesday 7.30pm at the Mead Hall in East Lane W/stead. Social events and outings throughout the year. See W.I. Noticeboard in the High Street for more information or contact our Secretary Gillian Keen: wheathampsteadwicommittee@outlook.com New members always welcome.

Herts and Middx Badger Group

We look after badgers and their habitat across the two counties. We are involved in badger rescues, surveys, monitoring, education, advice, campaigning and upholding the law relating to badgers. Meet 1st Tuesday of the month from 8pm in the Mead Hall in Wheathampstead. Emergency line. 07860 210414

Enquiries. info@hmbadgergroup.org.uk or visit <https://hmbadgergroup.org.uk/>

Football

Wheathampstead Wanderers was formed in 1990 by a small group of families from the village to promote and support youth football for the benefit of children and young people in Wheathampstead and surrounding areas. An FA Charter Standard Club, granted in 2008, with around 300 boys and girls playing

football. www.wheathampsteadwanderersfc.co.uk

Horticultural Society

Meets: St. Helen's School, Wheathampstead AL4 8AN. 7.30pm, first Wednesday of the month.

A friendly village gardening club welcoming everyone of all ages and enthusiasm- even armchair gardeners! A wide range of speakers [some selling plants], socials, visits to interesting gardens, a Plant Sale on 3rd Sunday in May - all are on the agenda.

Affiliated to the R.H.S. Occasional meeting on Zoom. For more information please e mail whortsoc@gmail.com or phone Jill on 01582 460394

Bluebell Memory Cafe

Friendship coffee activities and outings for those living with memory-related conditions and their supporters. 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, 10.30 to noon at the Mead Hall, East Lane AL4 8BP. Call Isobel Poole, 07949 630228 All Welcome

Brownies and Rainbows

1st Wheathampstead Brownies meets at St. Peter's in Gustard Wood on a Tuesday.

3rd Wheathampstead brownies meet at the Scout Hut on a Thursday.

1st Wheathampstead Rainbows meets at the Scout Hut on a Monday. There are currently spaces available so, if you would like your daughter to join please visit: go.girlguiding.org.uk to register your interest.

One of the leaders in the village will be in touch when a space becomes available. Registering your daughter earlier rather than later will mean she will be added to our waiting list and when a place becomes available at the right age, she will be offered a place.

Squirrels Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

All popular and meet regularly at the Scout Hut in Mead

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Lane, Wheathampstead as follows: Squirrel Drey Tuesday 5:15 to 6:15
Beaver Colony Wednesday 5:15 to 6:15
Mead Cub Pack Tuesday 6:30 to 8:00
Delaport Cub Pack Wednesday 6:30 to 8:00
Lamer Scout Troop Friday 7:30 to 9:00
Explorer Scouts Tuesday 8:15 to 10:00
If your child would like a place, please contact:
wl1stwheathampstead@outlook.com

Music and Singing

Introducing the Clover Singing Club, a new concept in ensemble singing for ladies, with emphasis on laughter and relaxation. Try us out - first session free. No need to read music. Sessions are term time on Mondays 1.15-3.15 p.m., Mead Hall, Wheathampstead.

Contact Charlotte 07791 741233.

The Hardynge Choir

The Hardynge Choir is keen to help people experience the joy of choral singing, and welcomes new members, whatever their previous expertise, especially Altos, Tenors and Basses. We rehearse on a Monday evening 7:45pm and 9:45pm during school term time at the School Hall of St Helen's C of E Primary School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead. Call Primrose Watts on 01582 460092 www.hardyngechoir.org

Wheathampstead U3A

Wheathampstead U3A is open to anyone who is retired or semi-retired. No qualifications are needed, and none are given. Make friends, learn new skills or refresh old ones through our wide range of interest groups. Enjoy first-rate speakers at monthly meetings in the Memorial Hall and participate in organised outings to places of interest. Find out more at: <https://u3asites.org.uk/wheathampstead/home>

Wheathampstead History Society

The society meets at 7.15pm, the third

Wednesday of each month, in the Mead Hall, East Lane. It offers a programme of talks promoting local history & heritage, undertakes research projects and encourages and supports members' research. For further information visit our website www.wheathampsteadheritage.org.uk

Wheathampstead Warriors

Your local running club, all abilities welcome! The best way to find out more about the Warriors is to come and join one of our club runs on a Tuesday or Thursday evening. Currently all runs need to be booked in advance but please contact us on wheatywarriormembership@gmail.com and we'll be able to arrange for you to join us for a run. More information can be found on our website - <https://wheathampsteadwarriors.co.uk/>

Positive Movement

On-line classes twice per week (term time) via Zoom, Tuesdays at 2pm and Thursday at 10.30. Classes are for those with reduced mobility. Gentle, chair-based exercises to improve Posture, Balance, Strength and Stability.

Call Lynn on 07866 168242 to arrange for a trial class.

Wheathampstead Wine Club

Friendly social group that meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:30 at the Mead Hall except for July, August and December. You don't need to know anything about wine. Members can learn about the wines that they are sampling and get wine shopping and price advice too from the various tastings and presentations that take place during meetings. If this sounds like your type of social evening, call Alan 07866 953971 or email wiggintonalan@gmail.com or just come along - you will be very welcome!

THE SWAN

Wheathampstead

- Lunch served daily 12 till 2.30pm
- Friday evening Hand Battered Cod, Burgers or Pizza
- Monday evening full menu 6 till 9pm
- Pizza served daily, eat in or take away
- Live Music, Quiz and Bingo
- Sunday Meat Raffle
- Friday Drinks Raffle



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