



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

Mid-May 2025

Dear Swift Supporters,

Swift update

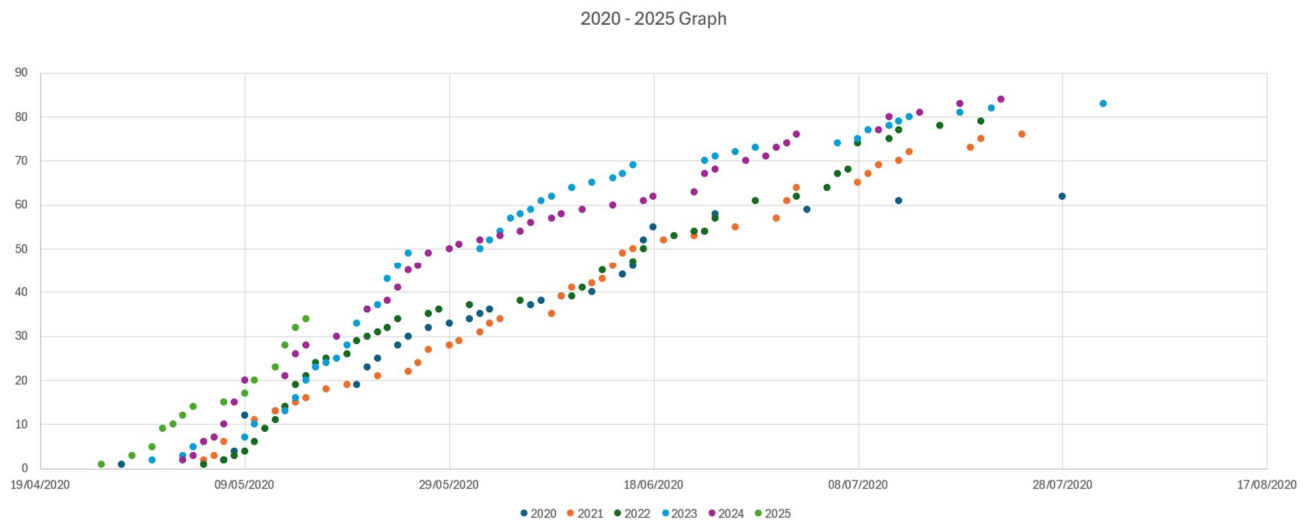
At the beginning of the month, we reported that we had recorded that three of our known nest sites were occupied by early returning Swifts. A lot has happened since then! Between us, our survey teams have now confirmed **thirty-four occupied Swift nests**. We are really seeing the benefit of having so many enthusiastic surveyors, including several new ones, and Swift Watchers

Swift site/colony	Number of nests – so far!
Upper Western Road	3
St. Anne's Church	4
Valence Road	2
St. Swithun's Terrace, (rear of High Street)	6
The Maltings	2
De Montfort Road, (1 x Woodcrete box and 1 x Peak Box)	2
Market Lane	1
King Henry's Road	2
Mealla Close	2
The Avenue	1
Station Street	3
Castle Precincts, (opposite The Maltings)	1
St. Martin's Lane	1
Rotten Row, (in double Peak box)	2
Potter's Lane	1
Grange Road	1

The very first of our Swifts to return was one of those that nests under the eaves of an attic in King Henry's Road. It arrived on 25th April, and we enjoyed watching it enter and leave the nest for a few days – it was a hopeful sign of everything that might be to come! We became a little despondent when it left the nest and didn't return. Imagine our relief and pleasure when the nest cam showed both Swifts in the nest space on 14th May!



Kevin has updated the graph, below, which compares nest numbers over the season from April to August for each year from 2020. The green dots record nests in 2025 and it seems that, although we had a bumper start to the year with the very warm weather, we are now roughly in line with previous years.



Some of our Swift colonies and nest sites



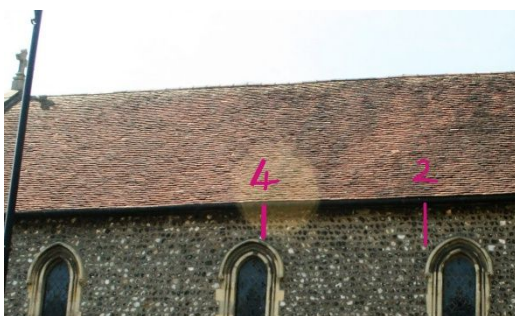
Valence Road



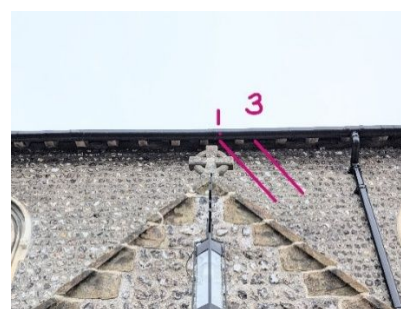
St. Swithun's Terrace



Upper Western Road



St. Anne's Church East



St. Anne's Church West



The Maltings



Market Lane

Swift Watch and Surveyor Sightings

Thank you very much to everyone who has sent in their sightings so far. Some of them are listed here to give you an idea of where to look to see our Swifts – then to let us know!

1st May

- Bridget saw four Swifts flying into the back of 80b High Street and one entered above the third window pane from the right at 13.15.
- Loick saw five Swifts over Keere Street gardens and circling above Westgate Chapel at 15:55.
- Stuart saw two to three pairs of Swifts hunting above Harvard Close, Malling at 19.00.

2nd May

- Nigel, a teacher at LOGS, High Street, saw 7-8 Swifts screaming above LOGS at 12.00 and all the children stood and watched!

3rd May

- Jane saw five Swifts screaming past the bottle neck and up the High Street at 10.50.
- Michael saw twelve Swifts above 24 De Montfort Road. Two flew low under the nest box and one Swift put its head inside the box.

9th May

- Loick saw one Swift bumping against the same spot at the rear of Brack Mound House five times at 20.49 before it eventually flew off.

10th May

- George and Ivy have been seeing a lot of fast and furious Swift activity around the junction of The Avenue with Bradford Road. On a return visit George spotted an entry to one of the nest sites.

11th May

- Gill reported up to eight Swifts swooping and wheeling low over Lambert Close, Russell Row and Harvard Close.
- Ed saw up to 8 Swifts near Anne of Cleves House at 18.50.
- Danny saw about 8 Swifts above St. Nicholas Lane, and one flew right past his face on Station Street at 17.45.
- Lesley saw six Swifts flying over Depot towards High Street at 18.00
- Layla saw nine Swifts over Old Malling Way at 19:00

12th May

- Kevin was watching the Castle Precincts site where Loick had seen a lot of banging on 9th May – and saw a Swift enter under the eaves!
- Nigel and Seema saw an entry to nest 3 at upper Western Road at about 20.30.
- Sue watched four Swifts flying low and circling over Anne of Cleves House and in Potters Lane at 20:40 and between 20:45 and 20:55 two Swifts made 5 bangs at the upper casement window of a house in Potters Lane and lots of flying up to the eaves.



Castle Precincts



Station Street



The Avenue

13th May

- Emma has been in touch to let us know that the Swift boxes on her house in Mill Road are getting some sustained interest! “A party of two low-flying Swifts last night around 19.00 with plenty of calls to see if the boxes were occupied. Then at 6.20 this morning we had two again which hung around for about 5 minutes and at 20.30 we’ve had six low-flying Swifts, with four hanging about trying various approaches as pairs, and two successful bangs just now”.
- George saw both Swifts enter the nest space at The Avenue.
- Juliet saw two Swifts enter one of the double nest boxes we installed in Rotten Row – one in each nest space! Nick only installed these boxes in March 2025!

14th May

- Wendy has recorded a second nest at Mealla Close – with some banging nearby that might mean another nest soon!
- Sue saw an entry to one of the nests in Potter’s Lane.
- Audrey and Nick recorded a fourth nest at St. Anne’s Church.

15th May

- We’re very pleased indeed to hear from Douglas that the Swifts have returned to one of his nests in Grange Road.
- Audrey saw a Swift fly out of a third nest in Station Street while walking past at 1.30 p.m.

What is it like to join our team of surveyors?

Here is a report from George, who is surveying in the Wallands area with Ivy the dog.

“Over the last few years, I’ve completely fallen in love with swifts — all thanks to meeting Audrey and Nick, who I’d bump into each summer, rain or shine, standing at the end of my building on Western Road. Their passion was contagious, and before I knew it, I was hooked. Now I’m totally smitten with these incredible creatures. In fact, I can hear them screaming joyfully along Western Road as I write this.

This year, I joined up as a Swift Monitor — and what can I say? I’ve been absolutely blown away by the experience. Spending a couple of hours just standing still, watching their breathtaking acrobatic flying displays... it’s like the greatest nature documentary I’ve ever seen — but live, right above my head! The soundtrack? Their wild, thrilling screeches as they swoop and dive — putting Dolby sound to shame.

This is pure joy.

It’s free.

It’s good for the soul.

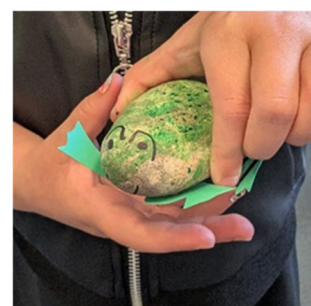
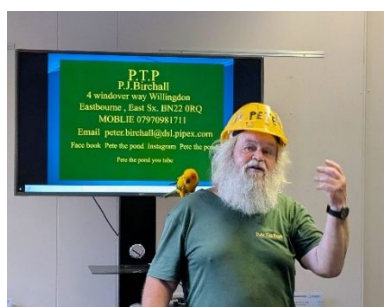
And by simply watching and recording, you’re helping protect these amazing birds.

What’s not to love?

P.S. You also meet the most brilliant people while you’re out there. Faith in people = restored.”

A Swift-friendly Town for Nature Recovery – the season continues!

We had another wonderful day at Lewes Climate Hub on 3rd May, when 82 visitors joined us to make pebble frogs, add to our Mosaic Wall and hear Pete the Pond talking about “The Importance of Ponds for Wildlife”.



On 10th May, we welcomed Helen and Tamsin from the Railway Land to help people add to the online Mosaic Map of green spaces and green corridors across Lewes. If you have a look at the online map, it shows, as blue dots, all the sites where Swifts have nested and where Swift boxes or bricks have been installed: <https://www.railwaylandproject.org/lewes-mosaic-map> If you have managed your home to make it wildlife-friendly, an online form invites you to add your contribution to the map!

During the day, visitors very much enjoyed making Hoverfly lagoons and insect drinking stations!



Making Hoverfly lagoons

Our Mosaic Wall is looking marvellous with everyone's additions of Swift-friendly town ideas! Our "Swift-friendly Town for Nature Recovery" season continues throughout May, and Lewes Climate Hub is open Wednesdays to Saturdays, 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Drop in any time to find out more about Swifts and share your ideas for keeping Lewes as a Swift-friendly town!



Making "tiles" to add to our Mosaic Wall



Saturday 17th May, 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. - People's Park for Nature



Join the People's Park for Nature team at Lewes Climate Hub and help us build a Wild Time Machine – powered by your wild memories and dreams for the future!

What wildlife once roamed our local spaces? What creatures could return? How might nature flourish? Share your stories and ideas, and together we'll create a magical, sensory experience that brings the wild past and future to life – the sights, sounds, and even tastes!

The People's Park for Nature supports the aims of our Swift-friendly town through promoting a mosaic of green and blue spaces across our landscape. It incorporates a patchwork of spaces, including community and privately owned land, nature reserves, farmland, gardens, ponds, office rooftops and allotments, all committed to our collective values of nature restoration and community engagement.

www.peoplesparkfornature.org

At 1.30 p.m. - We'll finish with a talk by ecologist and community rewilding expert Dylan Walker on how we can all help reintroduce lost species and restore ecosystems. Free

Saturday 24th May, 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. - Hedgehog Day!



We all love Hedgehogs – but we don't see them as often as we used to do. At 1.30pm, Emily Thrift, PhD student at the University of Sussex, will share her research into steps we can each take to help protect our remaining Hedgehog population, (and a range of other wildlife).

Rustic Tim will be joining us from 11.00 a.m. to show how to craft your very own Hedgehog out of wood.

The talk is free, and Hedgehogs will cost 50p to £1 to make.

Saturday 31st May, 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. _ Why Bugs Matter!

Did you know our population of insects and invertebrates has fallen by 61% since 2004, according to Buglife research? With parent Swifts needing an estimated 20,000 insects a day when they are feeding their chicks, this could be a huge factor in the Swifts' decline.

So, to round off our Swift-Friendly Town season, at 1.30 p.m., we're delighted to welcome Alice Parfitt from Buglife for her very timely talk "Why Bugs Matter".

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/>



Drop into the Climate Hub any time between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. to make a bug hotel to put in your garden.

Thank you to the team at Lewes Climate Hub for letting us use their lovely room and for supporting us in so many ways! <https://lewesclimatehub.org/>

Thinking of installing a Swift box or House Martin cup?

We have been making lots of site visits to prepare for our next batch of Swift box and House Martin cup installations. Do get in touch by contacting us via lewesswifts@gmail.com if you are interested. One of the boxes we installed in De Montfort Road and two at the rear of Southover High Street have been occupied by Swifts.



Peak Swift box



Artificial House Martin cup made by Paul Stevens

If you used to have House Martins nesting at your home, let us know if you would like an artificial House Martin cup installed. We successfully installed several of the House Martin cups made by Paul Stevens in 2024 - and two of them were occupied a few months later!

Get in touch or follow us:

Email: lewesswifts@gmail.com

Facebook: Lewes Swift Supporters

X: @LewesSwifts

Instagram: @lewesswifts

BlueSky: @lewesswifts.bky.social

Spread the Word!

If you have a friend or relation who might be interested in helping Swifts or learning more about them, please do share this newsletter with them. The more people who know and care about Swifts, the better their prospects will be!

With best wishes from the LSS Committee:

Mike Ramsey, Chairperson and Surveyor

Kevin Murphy, Recorder and Surveyor

Sharon Hall, Treasurer

Crispin Holloway, Founder Member

Audrey Jarvis, Secretary, Surveyor and Communications