



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

July 2026

Dear Swift Supporters,

The unusual weather has continued with some of the hottest days, and nights, we have ever experienced. Several Swift nest will have growing chicks at this stage of the season, and we only hope that they are able to keep cool enough to thrive.

Swift rescuers report that hot weather can be one of the factors that result in Swifts being brought to them for rehabilitation. As the birds move close to the entrance to get more air and cool off, they may fall out before they are mature enough to fly. A reminder about what to do if you find a fallen Swift is repeated at the end of this newsletter.

Swift update

Here is the updated record of the sites where nest entrances or exits have been recorded so far in 2026. So far, we have recorded **81 different nest spaces** visited by Swifts - and you may be able to add to this total!

Swift site/colony	2026 records	Where is the nest?
Upper Western Road	4	<i>Under eaves</i>
Rear of Western Road	2	<i>In nest boxes</i>
St. Anne's Church	10	<i>Under eaves</i>
Valence Road	5	<i>Three under fascia, two in nest boxes</i>
Westfield House	1	<i>In old air brick</i>
High Street	1	<i>Under eaves</i>
Top of St. Swithun's Lane	8	<i>Under eaves</i>
The Maltings	6	<i>Under eaves</i>
King Henry's Road	1	<i>Under eaves</i>
De Montfort Road	8	<i>Seven in nest boxes and one under eaves</i>
The Avenue	4	<i>Under eaves</i>
Station Street	8	<i>Under eaves</i>
Bridgewick Close, Old Mallig Way	3	<i>Under eaves</i>
St. John's Terrace	1	<i>In nest box</i>
St. Martin's Lane	3	<i>Under eaves</i>
Flea Market	4	<i>Under eaves</i>
Mill Road	2	<i>In boxes</i>
Abinger Place	3	<i>Under eaves</i>
Grange Road	1	<i>Under eaves</i>
Mealla Close	1	<i>Under eaves</i>
Potters Lane	1	<i>Under eaves</i>
Southover High Street	4	<i>Two under eaves and two in boxes</i>

Installing new Swift nest boxes

On 23rd June, Audrey and Nick Jarvis met with Dave Boddington, (Swift Champion for Sussex Ornithological Society), to install five more nest boxes in Lewes. It was very hot, but luckily not quite the hottest day of the year!



Valence Road



Western Road



Hereward Way



Valley Road

So far, we have installed 220 nest boxes in Lewes. It is expected to take a while for Swifts to get used to using them for breeding and last year we were pleased to record that twelve of the boxes were in regular use.

This year, nest box owners have been overjoyed to report to us that three more nest boxes have been visited by Swifts for the first time.

We have been able to fund the purchase and installation of 87 of the Swift nest boxes, thanks to grant funding from Chalk Cliff Trusts, donations and bequests from residents, and the donation of boxes by Sussex Ornithological Society, Southover Church, and residents.

As you will remember, the Swift population is estimated to have fallen by over 60% over the last two decades. House Martins are also on the red list of birds of conservation concern, and we are very keen to install more artificial House Martin nest cups in areas where they used to build their own nests. One of the artificial nest cups that we installed in St. John's Terrace on 6th May had House Martins flying in and out by 8th June! The house owner said that she feels very privileged and happy!

Surveying Swifts!

One of the joys of Swift watching and organising events, such as our Nature Recovery season in May, is meeting new people who are interested in Swifts. New surveyor Jeremy Woolley sent us this message to share.

"When I moved to Lewes last year, becoming a Swift surveyor wasn't on my radar, let alone my to do list! In fact, a year ago I wouldn't have known a Swift from a Swallow. By complete luck, I happened upon Edward Mayer's fascinating talk at the Climate Hub in May and was instantly hooked by these mind-blowing birds. I've quickly found myself out enjoying these lovely summer evenings getting to know the nooks and crannies of my new home town in a completely unexpected way. Thanks to Loick, Audrey and co for the company and guidance!"

Do get in touch if you would like to join our survey team!

Swift Walks 2026

Swift Awareness Week this year continues until 5th July - to celebrate these migratory birds, highlight their declining numbers, and encourage communities to protect nest sites and install Swift nest boxes or Swift bricks. The Swift Walk on Wednesday 1st July is fully booked, but there are still a couple of places left on the walk on Saturday 4th July.

Our first walk on 27th June was unusually dramatic with exciting thunder and lightning not long before we set off. Because of the weather, we had an unusually small group of interested and interesting people and, as the skies cleared, we all enjoyed watching the screaming parties at the top of St. Swithun's Terrace. We took a detour along De Montfort Road to show the boxes that we have installed there. The Swifts rewarded us by screaming past and entering one of the boxes. We finished at the top of Western Road, where we saw entries to two of the nests.



The Maltings



St. Swithun's Terrace

We received a lovely message afterwards from one of the people who attended:

"Thank you for taking us Swift watching last night. I so enjoyed seeing Lewes coming alive once more with the Swifts.. What an accomplishment, after years of decline, an amazing success story. At times when you think that Mother Nature is on her knees it's people like you that put the time and effort into fighting back and giving her a helping hand."

Dates for your diary

- Lewes Swifts Supporters will have a stall at the Societies Fair on Saturday 5th September, 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at Lewes Town Hall.
- On Tuesday 6th October, from 7.30 p.m., we will hold our AGM at the Linklater Pavilion. After a brief business item and an update on the Swifts of Lewes, our guest speaker will be Kate Bradbury talking about “Gardening for Wildlife”. This will be followed by refreshments.

Thank you to all the surveyors and Swift Watchers who share their sightings with us and help us to monitor the Swift activity as carefully as possible. Every sighting that you send us might help us to find new places where the Swifts are congregating - and perhaps even nesting birds!

If you see some Swifts, this is what we would like to know:

- Date
- Time
- Address of nearest property
- Number of Swifts
- What the Swifts were doing, for example, flying, screaming, or banging against a potential nest space.



Swifts flying along De Montfort Road

What to do if you find a grounded Swift

Because Swifts eat, sleep, drink, and mate in the air, only landing when they are ready to breed, a Swift on the ground it is likely to be in trouble. It could be injured or be a fledgling that has fallen out of the nest before it is ready to fly.

If the Swift does not recover immediately and fly away, put it in a quiet place in a suitable covered container with air holes, such as a shoe box, and contact ESWRAS for advice. Their 24 Hour Emergency Rescue Line number is **0300 10 26 999**.

Get in touch or follow us:

If you live in an area where there is an existing colony of Swifts or House Martins, or where there used to be, do get in touch if you would like a Swift box or an artificial House Martin cup installed at your home. When we have the opportunity to expand existing colonies for these social birds, we are usually able to fund the boxes/cups and their installation if your property is suitable.

Just contact us via lewesswifts@gmail.com

To report your Swift sightings, or to ask for advice about installing a Swift box or House Martin cup, you may contact us via:

- Email: lewesswifts@gmail.com
- Facebook: Lewes Swift Supporters
- X: @LewesSwifts
- Instagram: @lewesswifts
- BlueSky: @lewesswifts.bky.social
- Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/>

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! Do encourage people to sign up as a member and receive our newsletter and invitations to our talks and walks – a growing membership can also help us when we are making grant applications.

With best wishes from the LSS Committee:

Mike Ramsey, Chairperson and Surveyor
Kevin Murphy, Recorder and Surveyor
Sharon Hall, Treasurer
Crispin Holloway, Founder Member
Russo James, Surveyor
Loick Tyson, Surveyor
Audrey Jarvis, Secretary, Surveyor and Communications

