



Lewes Swift Supporters

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 14th October 2025 at 7.30 p.m. at The Linklater Pavilion

Present: Mike Ramsey, (Chairperson), Audrey Jarvis, (Secretary), Nick Jarvis, (Surveyor), Kevin Murphy, (Recorder), Sharon Hall, (Treasurer), Cllr Emily Clarke, (Mayor of Lewes), Peter King, (Director of Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust), Gill Cawdron, Heather Hill, Andrew Hill, Davina Williams, Wendy Muriel, (Surveyor), Elizabeth Lambert, Lynn Wiseman, Nick Wiseman, Nigel Pargiter, Seema Kapila, Janet Whitman, Pi Townsend, Jo Lavender, Natasha Stonestreet, (Surveyor), Ann van den Westhuizen, Russo James, (Surveyor), Jane Lee, Fiona Dennis, Jan Hunt, George Lee, (Surveyor), Abigail Warren, Dave Boddington, (SOS Swift Champion), Carina Morrissy, Tom Secretan, Lalick Daniels, Robert Fost, Tris Moore, Duncan Armstrong, Loick Tyson, (Surveyor)

Apologies: Claire Duc, Tony Duc, Audrey Wende, Sue O'Hare, Pamela Lewis, Mary Hempshall

1. Welcome

Mike Ramsey welcomed everyone to the AGM and outlined the agenda for the evening. He introduced the Mayor of Lewes, Cllr. Emily Clarke, who affirmed the support of Lewes Town Council for our Swift-friendly Town initiative. She explained that LSS and LTC have produced a leaflet for councillors that details the Swift hot spots in Lewes so that they may confidently recommend installation of Swift boxes or bricks in new developments and renovations.



The Mayor of Lewes, Cllr. Emily Clarke, with our Swift-friendly Town flag

2. Results of the election of LSS officers

Audrey Jarvis shared results of the election that was conducted in advance by email. All current officers were unanimously re-elected.

Position	Name of Candidate
Chairperson	Mike Ramsey
Treasurer	Sharon Hall
Recorder	Kevin Murphy
Secretary and Communications	Audrey Jarvis

We are pleased to be welcoming three of our current surveyors to join our committee from November: George Lee, Russo James, and Loick Tyson.

3. Treasurer's Report

Our treasurer, Sharon Hall, reported on income and expenditure over 2025.

Balance 1 Sept 2024	£543.00
Income this year	£3,461.60
Expenditure this year	£2,481.90
Balance 31 August 2025	£1,522.70

Income

- Lewes District Local Lottery – monthly payments from those who choose LSS as their “good cause”
- Donations from residents and the sale of our Swift badges at events
- Donation from Moore Law in support of our Swift-friendly Town initiative
- Grant funding from Chalk Cliff Trust to pay for our Swift-friendly Town season of events

Expenditure

- Purchase and installation of Swift boxes, callers, and artificial House Martin cups
- Funding speakers and display materials for our Swift-Friendly Town for Nature Recovery season in April/May

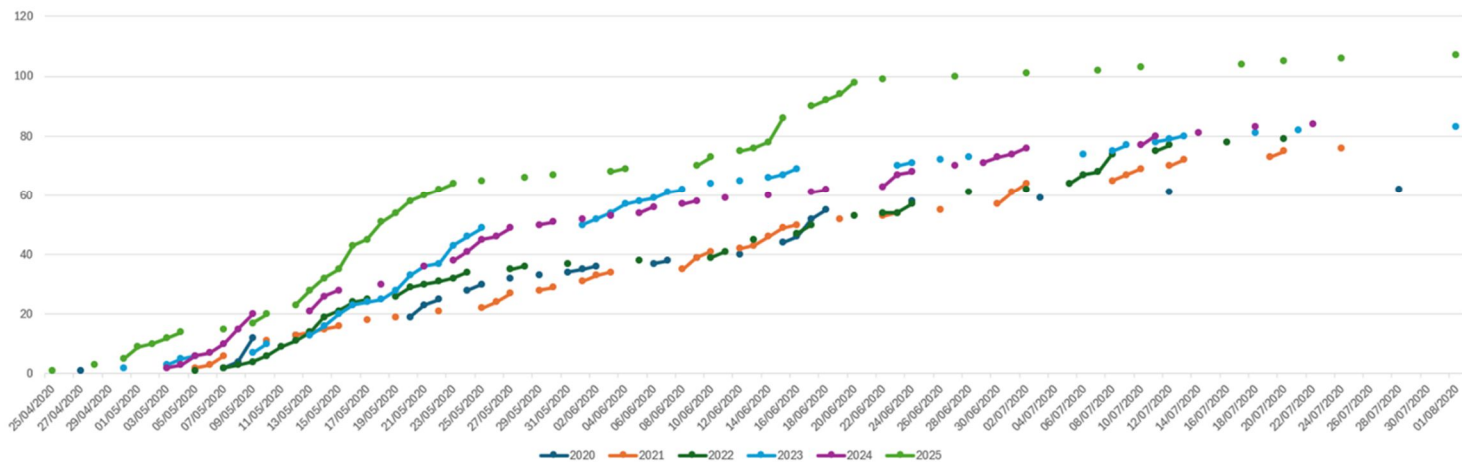
4. Overview of Swift activity in Lewes in 2025

Kevin Murphy, (LSS Recorder), explained our survey methods and the details that we record. In 2025, we recorded entries and/or exits to 107 different nest spaces, which is an increase on numbers from previous years. This may not correspond to 107 breeding sites since some of the entries may have been made by Swifts prospecting for a suitable nest site in 2026. It is a hopeful trend that may be partly due to the warm dry weather throughout spring and summer. Kevin's graph, below, compares the number of places where we recorded nest entrances and/or exits from 2020 to 2025.

Dave Boddington, (Swift Champion for Sussex Ornithological Society) confirmed that other Swift groups in Sussex had also seen an upturn in Swift activity this year.

More details will follow in our Annual Report for 2025, which will be sent out to members in December. Meanwhile, Kevin is adding all 3,000+ records from surveyors and Swift Watchers to the BTO BirdTrack data! Thank you to Kevin for all his hard work in collating and distributing our records.

Graph 2020 - 2025
detected nests



Graph from Kevin Murphy, (LSS Recorder), comparing LSS records of Swift nests from 2020 to 2025

5. Activities and events in 2025

Audrey Jarvis gave a summary of some of the events organised by Lewes Swift Supporters in 2025. We had over 400 visitors to our “Swift-friendly Town for Nature Recovery” season at Lewes Climate Hub in April and May - launched with a parade through the town to welcome back the Swifts! The attendance at our events, stalls, talks and walks, and the growing number of positive reactions to our social media, suggest a growing level of support for Swifts. Thank you very much to all the committee members, surveyors, and supporters that contribute to raising awareness of these wonderful birds and how to help them.



At the end of our Swift parade to welcome back the Swifts in April

6. The Cockshut Regeneration Project

Peter King, (Director of the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust), gave an excellent presentation to explain how Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust set about enhancing the Cockshut for biodiversity. The resulting wetlands have made a valuable addition to our Swift-friendly Town where we have seen Swifts, House Martins, and Swallows swooping and feeding over the water.



View of the Cockshut wetlands from Peter King

Peter explained the goals of the project:

- Restoration of the area to a functional wetland
- Boost biodiversity across multiple taxa
- Provide resilience to flooding and drought
- Create habitat to encourage SSSI features
- Remove parrot's feather to a manageable level
- Provide high quality access to the public

Results of surveys to date record 84 different bird species and 14 dragonfly species, (where previously there were only two).

Peter also outlined the ten year action plan to restore the Winterbourne, a rare chalk stream, to good health. This year, work has also begun on phase one of the Landport Brooks Project with ditch maintenance that remade the ditches with lots of “wiggles”. Next year they will be aiming to improve the ecological health and restore wet habitats to this floodplain grazing marsh.

To find out more about the work of the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, see their website:

<https://oart.org.uk/projects/cockshut-restoration>

You might also be interested in visiting the OART stall at the Lewes Floods 25th Anniversary exhibition at Lewes Town Hall on Saturday 1st November, 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. It is a free event to commemorate the Lewes floods in 2000 and will share photographs, films, practical ideas, and activities – “learning from the past and preparing for the future”. For more details, see <https://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk/home-page-1/lewes-floods-25th-anniversary/>

If you are interested in volunteering to join practical conservation sessions for volunteers at the Cockshut, please contact Beverley Honeybun: beverley@railwaylandproject.org



Peter King, Director of Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust

Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM - and special thanks to Sharon Hall for organising and serving the refreshments.

Get in touch or follow us:

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

