



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

August 2021

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Welcome to our August edition of the newsletter from Lewes Swift Supporters! Perhaps because of the extremes of weather this Spring and Summer, many people have reported that there seem to have been fewer Swifts in the air than in 2020 - but there is a lot to celebrate!

Nest activity 2021

The total number of active nests recorded this year in Lewes, is 76, which compares well with the 64 nests recorded in 2020 and the 32 recorded in 2019.

This increase in the number of nests recorded must be partly due to the greater number of surveyors, and the faithful reporting of our many Swift Watchers! Having had 6 areas in 2020 and only 4 areas when we started in 2019, in 2021 we were able to increase the number of Swift survey areas to 10 to monitor a larger area of the town.

Although the new surveys area of Cliffe, Nevill and the Eastern side of Malling did not reveal any new nest activity, this information is still useful to us! Thank you to Julie, Carina, Mary, and Emma for all their survey reporting. In contrast, Mike surveyed the new area around School Hill area and discovered the “new” colony of nests at the rear of the Flea Market. Persistent repeat visits by Kevin confirmed at least seven nests there, so we will definitely be monitoring there again next year!



Photograph of some of the Surveyors on a walk around the town to look at different Swift colonies, by Audrey Jarvis

Halfway through the season, we welcomed new Surveyor, Talitha, to our team. She had already sent in several interesting “Swift Watch” reports from Southover so was keen to take on a wider role. Talitha told us that: “One of my absolute favourite things while watching the Swifts these past couple of months was standing in Potter’s Lane just behind Anne of Cleves on early July evenings when groups of ten or more screaming Swifts would rush down that tiny little lane at head height - or lower! They do these wonderful, very fast, low-altitude circuits around the rooftops and gardens behind Anne of Cleves’ House there, and it is just astonishing to stand in Potter’s Lane right in the middle of it. Magnificent.”



Photograph of Potter's Lane, showing location of one of the nest entrances, by Talitha Bromwich

Shortly after arranging a box installation for Margaret, in Southover High Street, we were delighted to hear her success story. She told us that she has a breeding pair with young in one side of her new double Peak box and prospectors going into the other side!

Since October 2020, we have funded the purchase and installation of 25 Swift boxes at the hot spots in and near Western Road and De Montfort Road and helped residents to install a further 50 nest boxes at their homes. We hope that Margaret's Swifts spread the word about nest boxes being good breeding sites!

Followers of our Facebook page, ("Lewes Swift Supporters"), will know that we have been treated to several good photographs of the "High Street Swifts" taken by Swift Watcher Debs. Most of these Swifts are probably from the property at the rear of the High Street, near Cote, that has been monitored by our recorder, Kevin, for the past three years. This year Kevin recorded five different nest entrances there, with activity seen until 11th August!

As the season progressed, Debs noticed a lot of Swifts seemed to be investigating a gap in the eaves above her balcony and "banging" the top of the wall for several days as if prospecting for a nest. On the 13th July, to her surprise, she noticed that they were actually entering under the eaves! Being Debs, she was then able to send us a series of excellent photographs and videos to share this wonderful experience, and here is one of them!



In July, we were visited by Annie, Barry, Kasia and Piotr from the Swift Protection Associations in Reigate and Banstead. They are all dedicated "Swift rescuers" and are hoping to set up a group like Lewes Swift Supporters in their area. We started a tour of some of our Swift colonies at St. Anne's Church, where the Swifts performed beautifully! We were able to watch the Swifts screaming and diving just above our heads for some time and were rewarded later when they sent us a series of photographs, see left, taken by Barry Griffin.

More new nest boxes across Lewes!

In July we were able to meet with Dave Boddington, (@birdingbodds), to help him to install seven more Swift nest boxes in Lewes. Three of these, in Western Road and De Montfort Road, were funded by Lewes Swift Supporters. Thank you again to Sussex Ornithological Society, Sussex Police, Chalk Cliff Trust and Friends of Lewes for their grant funding towards increasing nest accommodation for Swifts!



Dave Boddington and Nick Jarvis installing Swift nest boxes, photographs by Audrey Jarvis

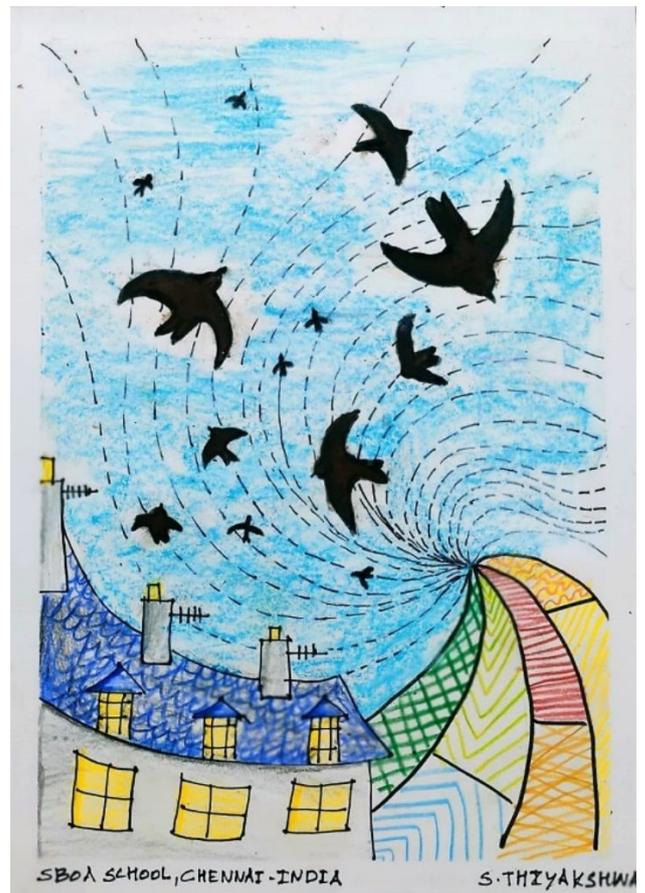
Swift poster competition

For Swift Awareness week in July, we shared several Swift-related activities and launched a Swift poster competition. Here is a copy of the winning entry – it's a beauty!

The proud winner has been sent a certificate and a £15 gift token.

If you would like to help Swifts, there is a lot of information on our website!

[How can we help Swifts? - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](http://e-voice.org.uk)





Thank you to everyone who helped to publicise Swift Awareness Week, especially Lewes Climate Hub. Dinah Morgan created this wonderful illustration in the window of their premises at 2 Fisher Street!

LDC Lottery

Thank you to all the kind residents who have made donations to Lewes Swift Supporters. If you would like to make a donation, please contact us on lewesswifts@gmail.com

You may also support LSS by choosing us as your “good Cause” in the LDC Local Lottery:

[Support Lewes Swift Supporters when you play Lewes District Local Lottery - Lewes District Local Lottery \(leweslocalottery.co.uk\)](https://www.leweslocalottery.co.uk)

Badges

Thanks to Paul Fosterjohn, who organised production of the original Lewes Swift Supporter enamel badges back in 2017, we are in the process of arranging for a second batch to be made. We hope to sell the badges for £5 each and use and profits received to pay for more nest boxes in Lewes!

Details of how to purchase one of these special badges, and help our Swifts, will be shared with you as soon as possible.



Lewes District Council Local Plan

A message from our Chairperson, Mike Ramsey

Lewes Swift Supporters are encouraged to make comments to help our Swifts and other wildlife on the new draft Lewes District Local Plan. For example, the role of ensuring biodiversity net gain of at least 10%, (but potentially 20%), on major building developments could be used by the Council to require developers to install more Swift accommodation to offset the loss of biodiversity caused by the development, (see page 18). In a wider context, the Nature Recovery Network that is discussed could also be used to require developers to fund improvements to our local nature reserves and nature corridors, to increase their biodiversity, when improvements cannot be fully achieved on-site. Consequently, when for example a developer chops down a mature oak tree to build very necessary new houses, they will have to do more than put up a few Swift boxes to claim sufficient biodiversity net gain. Comments need to be made before **3rd September**.

See: https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/gf2.ti/-/1301314/107546021.1/PDF/-/Lewes_District_Local_Plan_-_Issues_and_Options_-_July_2021_-_08-07-21.pdf

Planet Party, Sunday 19th September!



Lewes Swift Supporters will be represented on the “Biodiversity Stall” at the Planet Party on Sunday 19th September.

The Planet Party will be taking place at the Linklater Pavilion and on other areas of the Railway Land Nature Reserve from 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and **entrance is free!**

There promises to be lots of interesting activities for all ages! Food and drink will be available so why not come along and make a day of it!

Find out more by visiting the Lewes Climate Hub website:

<https://lewesclimatehub.org/planet-party-a-lewes-festival-for-climate-action>

With best wishes from the LSS Committee:

Mike Ramsey, Chairperson, Acting Treasurer and Surveyor

Kevin Murphy, Recorder and Surveyor

Sharon Hall, Surveyor

Crispin Holloway, Founder Member and Surveyor

Audrey Jarvis, Secretary, Surveyor and Website Manager



Swift chick at the entrance to a nest box in De Montfort Road, by Nick Jarvis

