



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

July 2021

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Celebrating Swift Awareness Week: 3rd July to 11th July 2021!

Just a month to go before the Swifts depart on their 6,000-mile journey back to Africa – but it could be an extremely exciting month! We should see young one-year-old Swifts that have fledged from Lewes returning to look for where there are Swift colonies. Keep your eyes peeled because they will not stay long and never start nest building. All being well they could return to Lewes from mid-May onwards in 2022 to look for a suitable nest site, find a mate and perhaps begin to build a nest. Then, in early May 2023, they will return to breed for the first time. Good luck to everyone with a new nest box!

Swifts' eggs normally hatch in mid-June, so from now on we may have more chances of seeing the parents visiting the nest to feed their young during the day! Please **keep your Swift Watch sightings coming in** – they have already helped us to identify several new nest sites! This link will remind you of what we would like to know and how to get in touch with us: [Lewes Swift Watch 2021 - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](https://www.e-voice.org.uk/lewes-swift-watch-2021-lewes-swift-supporters)

Swift Awareness Week was first organised by the “Action for Swifts” group in 2019 to celebrate this wonderful bird, bring attention to its decline and encourage people to do something to help Swift numbers to increase. See: <https://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/>

Things to do to celebrate Swifts!

- You could download the free children's booklet from Swift Conservation and share it with any younger members of your family: https://www.swift-conservation.org/eire_swift_booklet.pdf
- Ask the younger members of your family, or young friends and neighbours, to **draw or paint pictures of Swifts!** Please photograph them and send us a copy to share via our Facebook group, Twitter account and website to help to spread the word about Swifts! We will not publish any names without your permission.
- Print out the Swift Awareness Week poster and display it in your window, or on your door or gate to attract the attention of passers-by!
- Make some Swift bunting and display it in your window – or front garden if you have one! We made ours using the template for a finger puppet shared on our website: [Swift Awareness Week 2021 - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](https://www.e-voice.org.uk/swift-awareness-week-2021-lewes-swift-supporters)



Active nests so far!

The total number of active nests this year in Lewes, at time of writing, is 58. Last year we found 64 nests by the end of the season with 32 of them located at the top of the town. This year the spread of Swift nests appears to be a little different. We have noted 22 nests at the top of the town and several new colonies have been discovered elsewhere. After a quiet start to the season, by mid-June Swift activity had picked up considerably across our survey areas! For example, on a visit to Harvard Close to advise a resident about nest box installation, Nick and Audrey Jarvis were delighted to see up to 12 Swifts screaming and swooping just above, and below, head height for over half an hour. They were banging on the walls of one house and even poking their heads into a small hole there! The resident reported that they have been doing that all day from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

One of the active nests recorded in Southover High Street is in a nest box installed earlier this year – hope for all of us who are still waiting for Swifts to become residents! A further nest was discovered at a new site on Anne of Cleves' House, Southover High Street, by Swift Watcher Davina!



Recent news is that two more nests have been confirmed by Catherine, under the eaves of her own home in The Avenue and at the house of her neighbour!

For a weekly update on Swift activity in Lewes during Swift season, visit our website: [Swift News - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](http://www.swiftnews-lewes.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Reports from Lewes Swift Surveyors

At our mid-season Committee meeting on 15th June, we shared reports about what was happening in each of the survey areas. Here is a summary so that you can see what is going on too! We hope you realise what a valuable part Swift Watchers have played in reporting on Swift activity – and new nest sites!

Western Malling

Gill and Chris Garratt have seen most of the low flying groups of Swifts around Bridgewick Close, Harvard Close, Lambert Place and Boughey Place. They have confirmed two of the previous six nest sites in Bridgewick Close and a possible nest site at Boughey Place but generally have seen fewer low-flying Swifts than last year. They are hoping that they will be able to confirm more of the nests that were seen last year when the nestlings hatch and the parents visit them to feed them throughout the day.



Swooping Swifts in Harvard Close, Audrey Jarvis

Eastern Malling

Although Emma Allen has seen no nest activity during her surveys, she continues to see small groups flying to and from Malling Down over Mill Road. She often sights the first Lewes Swifts from there!

Cliffe

Julie McNamee reports that it is quiet as far as Swifts are concerned in this new survey area. This apparent absence of Swifts is also useful information for our records.

School Hill area

Mike Ramsey has discovered a new Swift colony of at least four nests at the rear of the Flea Market, (historically, 10 pairs were reported there in 2000 by Mike Helps).

Mid-town

Kevin Murphy has confirmed four active nests at the rear of the High Street, at least five at The Maltings, four at Swift House and two in Station Street. The custodian at Abinger Place reported that his nest is active, and access is now secured despite recent scaffolding of the building for repairs. If, during Swift season, you see some scaffolding around a building that you know to have a Swift nest, please let us know.



Photograph of some of the Swifts flying from the four nests at the rear of the High Street, by Debs Kemp

Eastern Southover

Leonie Mercer has reported on several nest entries and screamers and confirmed the second of two nests above a shop in Station Street.

Western Southover

Moya Tomlinson has a good view of Anne of Cleves' House and has reported on nest activity there. The new double Peak nest box in Southover High Street has been occupied by Swifts already!



*Photograph of one of the Grange Road Swifts
by Douglas Dodds*

Top of the town

Nick and Audrey Jarvis also report quieter skies this year, even on an evening when there are several nest entries. Ten of the nineteen nest spaces, previously recorded in 2020, are now active at St. Anne's Church and six of the eight nests that were confirmed in 2020 in upper Western Road. A nest under the eaves of a house in De Montfort Road is active, with visits during the day and evening, and three nest entrances have been recorded at a home in Valence Road. Michael, a supporter from Western Road whose back garden is underneath the established nest box in De Montfort Road, has reported both nest entries and exits there. Piers, a long-time supporter who has set up his own watching post outside this year, has reported nest entries and exits from above the small window on the West-facing wall of Westfield House. He has identified the exact point of entry to Nick and Audrey.

Wallands

Sharon Hall has confirmed two nests and bangers at her own property and at least two eggs! She will continue to report on their progress! On several occasions large groups of Swifts have been seen above Prince Edwards Road and, thanks to Swift Watcher Catherine, we have had two nests confirmed in The Avenue. There has been a lot of activity over The Avenue and Prince Edwards Road – so do let us know what you see there!



Photograph of a Swift on the nest by David Georgy, shared with LSS by Swift Conservation

Nevill

Briony Lambert, Mary Hempshall and Carina Morrissey, have surveyed several times in this new survey area. Mary even got up before dawn to see if she could spot any Swift action! For the second year running, banging has been observed on the houses on Nevill Road nearest The Gallops - and we have high hopes for the new double nest box there!

More new nest boxes across Lewes!

On 10th June we met up with Dave Boddington on a very sunny afternoon to help him to install four new Swift nest boxes for us in Bradford Road, De Montfort Road and St. Nicholas Lane. As you may remember, there is a Swift “hotspot” in Western Road and Bradford Road and De Montfort Road are not only close to this but on the regular evening flight path for the Swifts circling around before they return to their nests. A resident of St. Nicholas Lane has told us that there used to be quite a colony of Swifts in the now demolished Baxter’s Print Works which was replaced by modern buildings. So, all these sites could be “known” to Swifts currently or in the past! Good luck!



Dave fixing a single Peak nest box



A double Peak nest box - all ready for Swifts!

On 1st July, weather permitting, we are helping Dave to install three more boxes in St. Anne’s Crescent, Rotten Row and Western Road – again, all promising sites!

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

