



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

June 2021

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Happy World Swift Day – 7th June 2021!

To celebrate World Swift Day, here is a brief newsletter from Lewes Swift Supporters to keep you up to date on the news about Swifts in Lewes! It was a late, slow start to the season and many of us were becoming impatient for the arrival of the first wave of the mature breeding Swifts! Our first returns to nests were recorded from 6th May, compared to 28th April in 2020, and the same difference has been noted across the country by other Swift groups. We are hoping that the delays are due to the unusually fine Spring in 2020 contrasting with the very cold and changeable weather this year, and that it will not mean that overall numbers of Swifts are reduced.

Kevin, our Recorder, collates all the information from our surveys and from Swift Watch sightings. He reports that, although there are fewer flying Swifts recorded this year, the total number of active nests compares well with this time last year. He reminds us that now the Swifts are incubating the eggs so there can be a long time between Swifts visiting the nests. Once the young birds hatch, and are demanding more and more food, we will be able to catch sight of them more easily!

Active nests so far!

Here is a brief update on the 33 active nest sites recorded in 2021 up to the time of writing.

- Western Road - 6 nests
- St. Anne's Church - 9 nests
- Valence Road - 2 nests
- High Street - 4 nests
- Grange Road - 1 nest
- Bridgewick Close - 1 nest
- Market Lane - 2 nests
- Southover High Street - 1 nest
- King Henry's Road - 1 nest
- Station Street - 1 nest
- The Maltings - 1 nest
- Market Street - 1 nest
- East Street - 1 nest
- St. Martin's Lane - at least 2 nests!

St. Anne's Church – nine nests so far!



Thank you and well done to our surveyors and to all the Supporters who have sent in their sightings. They have been invaluable!

Lewes Swift Watch 2021!

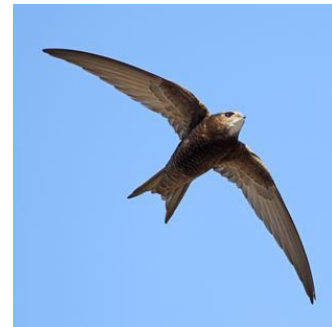
During the 2020 Swift season our formal surveys were very much enhanced by reports of Swift sightings from Swift Watchers all over Lewes. You may remember that they helped us to identify a “new” colony in Malling! This year, they have already confirmed nest activity at two of our known Swift sites, at Anne of Cleves’ House and The Maltings, and revealed a new nest in East Street! You can help to give a more complete picture of Swift activity across Lewes because it is likely that you will be out and about at different times of day from our surveyors and may well be able to see the rear of buildings not visible from the street. Please keep your sightings coming in! This is what we would like to know:

- Date and time;
- A good description of the location, e.g., the address nearest to your sighting;
- Number of Swifts seen;
- Weather conditions, e.g., any helpful information about whether it is raining, windy, sunny or cloudy, and the approximate temperature.

If you can add any more details, that would be great! For example, are the Swifts flying low? Could they be prospecting for a nest site by repeatedly showing an interest in a particular building? Did you see a Swift enter or leave a nest?

You can send us your sightings via:

- Our Facebook group: Lewes Swift Supporters
- Twitter: @LewesSwifts
- Email: lewesswifts@gmail.com
- The “Contact Us” from on our website:
[Home - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](http://Home - Lewes Swift Supporters (e-voice.org.uk))



Revived colony?

We had some exciting news about newly discovered nest sites from Mike Ramsey, LSS Chairperson, following his survey on 27th May 2021!



“Good news – I saw 3 swifts circling around the rear of the Flea Market from around 8:20 p.m. tonight, and saw one enter under the roof at 8:30 p.m.

I took a photo that show a rather blurry swift image (in lower yellow circle, ‘nest’ hole in upper circle, approximately). It did not enter the ‘nest’ at that pass but did in another pass soon after. It will be interesting to see if there are any other nests here, which might be the residue of the 10 nests reported by Mike Helps back in 2000.”

Mike is covering one of the four new survey areas which includes the centre of town.

New nest boxes across Lewes

We are very pleased to have received lots of requests from Lewes Residents asking for advice about installing Swift boxes on their home or workplace! As you know, the lack of suitable nest spaces is one of the factors that has contributed to the decline in the Swift population: as many old buildings have been renovated or demolished and modern building methods do not allow for the nooks and crannies where Swifts choose to nest.



All Saints Centre nest boxes, photograph by Fiona Dennis

Back in March we were contacted by Lewes Swift Supporter Fi, of Fi's Yard who had collected several Swift nest boxes and wished them to be put up in her neighbourhood! After a walk around the area with Fi, we suggested that the best place could be at the rear of the All Saints Centre and identified several potential sites for boxes. The result is four double boxes and one single under the eaves at the rear of the building! Well done Fi and thank you to All Saints!

Later this month even more nest boxes will be going up on Lewes homes. This will make a total of 43 single and 17 double boxes - 77 new nest spaces for prospecting Swifts! In the Swift "hot spots" near Western Road and De Montfort Road, Lewes Swift Supporters have been able to fund 21 of the boxes and their installation, thanks to grant funding from Friends of Lewes, Sussex Police and Chalk Cliff Trust.

Helping Swifts

One of the ways which you can help Swifts is by spreading the word about this fascinating bird! Why not download our **World Swift Day** poster from our website and display it to inform passers-by?!

[Swift News - Lewes Swift Supporters \(e-voice.org.uk\)](http://e-voice.org.uk)

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 and Surveyor



Photograph of the "High Street Swifts" as they fly out from the property, by Debs Kemp.

If you have any photographs of Swifts, we would love you to share them with us!