



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

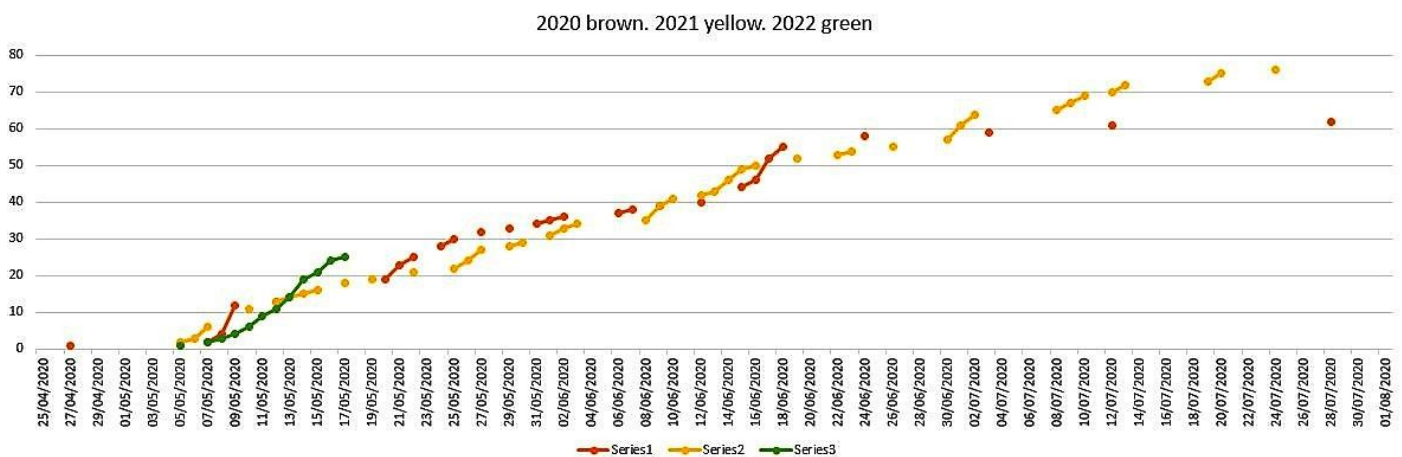
May 2022

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Welcome to our May edition of the newsletter from Lewes Swift Supporters! North-easterly winds and bad weather in southern Europe delayed the arrival of many birds from Africa this year, including most of our Swifts! However, from 21st April we started to receive reports of single birds and pairs flying low over our skies and we had recorded our first nest entry by 5th May. If anything, I think that the late start has made their return even more thrilling for our surveyors and for all of you taking part in Swift Watch!

Nest activity so far in 2022

At the time of writing, our surveys have confirmed that Swifts have returned to 27 nest spaces in Lewes. Kevin Murphy, our Recorder, is charting the 2022 nest numbers against those from 2020 and 2021, and you may see the comparison up to the 17th May in the graph, which shows that things are going quite well – and we have a lot to look forward to in the coming months!



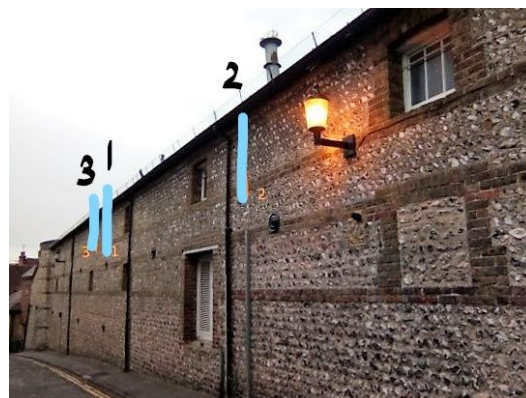
The current range of the Swift nests across Lewes is as follows:

- Upper Western Road – 5
- St. Anne's Church – 5
- Valence Road – 2
- Rear High Street, (top of St. Swithun's) – 3
- Rear High Street, (behind Cote) -1
- Grange Road – 1
- The Maltings – 3
- Potter's Lane - 1
- King Henry's Road – 1
- St. Martin's Lane – 1
- De Montfort Road – 2
- Station Street – 1
- Bridgewick Close – 1
- Southover High Street – 1
- The Avenue - 2

Here are some photographs which show the positions of 2022 recorded nest entrances at some of our more public colonies.



Station Street



The Maltings



St. Anne's Church – East



St. Anne's Church - West

More new nest boxes across Lewes!

Since the end of last Swift season, we are happy to say that we have been kept quite busy advising people on installation of new Swift nest boxes and helping to install them. Several people have also responded to letters from us which asked them to consider putting up a box while they had scaffolding erected at their home. LSS funded one of these at the Black Horse on Western Road, (pictured right), because it is between two Swift hot-spots and on a frequent flight path for Swifts!



Sun Street



Valence Road



Christ Church



Spences Lane

Thank you to Dave Boddington and Nick Jarvis for installing the boxes. Through LSS installations or advice, we now have an additional 77 single boxes, 30 double boxes and 2 triple boxes – breeding spaces for 143 Swifts! This year and last year, we have noticed “banging” against some of the boxes in De Montfort Road and Western Road. “Banging” is when a Swift approaches a nest space and brushes or bangs against it before flying on. It is believed that this behaviour happens when Swifts are seeking unoccupied holes – and that a new pair may occupy the nest space later in the season! For example, on 9th May at St. Anne’s Church we recorded a Swift banging under the eaves to the right of the main door, (nest 3), and were able to confirm that a Swift flew into that nest space on 14th May! Similarly, in 2021, we recorded banging above the third window of the church, and we have seen a Swift fly out of that site this year, (nest 2).

Swifts bred successfully in one of the boxes in Southover High Street in 2021 and we are eager to see if they return this year!

It is not too late to install a box this year. The second wave of Swifts, looking for their first nest site and a mate, are yet to come! In July, younger Swifts, interested in joining a colony, will visit several nest sites in the local area to investigate the best ones. They might even enter one of your boxes to investigate! If you are interested, get in touch with us by sending a **new email to lewesswifts@gmail.com**, (it is best not to reply to the group email accompanying this newsletter, in case your message becomes lost in the thread!).

Have a look at the range of boxes available from Peak nest boxes: <https://peakboxes.co.uk/>

Swift Cam!

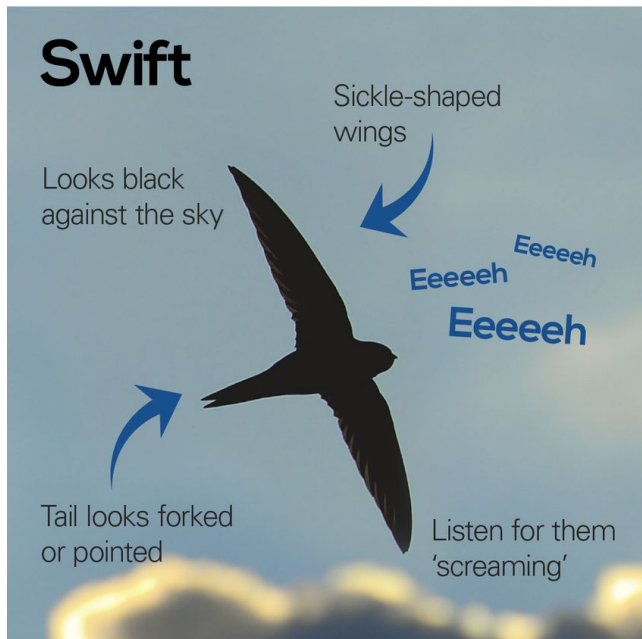
A new development for this year is the installation of a nest cam at one of the faithfully visited nest sites in Sharon’s home in King Henry’s Road. LSS subsidised a Greenfeathers Wi-Fi Bird Box Camera which Using the nest cam, we were able to see exactly when a Swift returned for the first time, at 7.55 p.m. on 8th May! The second Swift returned on 12th May and it was lovely to watch the footage of the two birds preening each other before settling down. Sharon has set it up so that committee members may view footage and record it to share with our Facebook group, Twitter account and on our website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/swift-diary-2022/>



The two Swifts snuggling in the nest at King Henry’s Road

Swift Watch

We are very pleased with the number and quality of reports we have had already from Swift Watchers – these are all included in our end of season data transfer to BTO BirdTrack: [BirdTrack | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#). Your information really helps us and could reveal new colonies - because you may be able to see areas that our surveyors cannot view from the street!



A reminder of what we would like to know:

- Date and time
- Address
- How many Swifts seen
- Weather conditions - such as wind strength, temperature, cloud cover and whether it was raining
- The behaviour of the Swifts - were they flying around, diving towards a building, screaming?

Descriptive picture of a Swift - courtesy of RSPB

You can send your sightings to us via:

- Our Facebook group: Lewes Swift Supporters
- Twitter: @LewesSwifts
- Email: lewesswifts@gmail.com
- Our website: using the "Contact us" form on the Home page

We will keep you informed about our Lewes Swifts via the same methods and in occasional newsletters as the season gets under way!

World Swift Day

On June 7th it is World Swift Day! The aim of the WSD group is to spread the word about how wonderful Swifts are and how we need to protect them: <https://www.worldswiftday.org/>

A poster is attached to this newsletter – and we hope that as many people as possible will print it out and display it in their window to spread the word to friends, neighbours, and colleagues.



Photograph of Swift leaving the nest, from World Swift Day

Swift Awareness Week

This year Swift Awareness Week is from 2nd July to 10th July. LSS members have already been invited to join one of the three Swift Walks around Lewes during this week. They are now all fully booked but let us know if you would like to be put on the waiting list – we may be able to arrange an additional walk.

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 \(leweslocallottery.co.uk\)](http://leweslocallottery.co.uk)

LSS Badges

Enamel badges showing our logo are still available at a cost of £5 each, (£7 if delivered by post). Any profits received will be used to pay for more nest boxes in Lewes! Wearing a badge is an excellent way to spread the word about these marvellous birds!

For details of how to purchase one of these special badges, just contact us via lewesswifts@gmail.com



With best wishes from the LSS Committee:

Mike Ramsey, Chairperson and Surveyor

Kevin Murphy, Recorder and Surveyor

Sharon Hall, Treasurer

Crispin Holloway, Founder Member

Emma Allen, Surveyor

Audrey Jarvis, Secretary, Surveyor and Website Manager





Join us in celebrating World Swift Day!

7th June 2022



Membership of Lewes Swift Supporters is free!

To join us, e-mail: lewesswifts@gmail.com

Find out more about us, and how to help these wonderful but endangered birds, by visiting our

website: [https://e-](https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/)

[voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/](https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/)

Twitter: @LewesSwifts

Facebook Group: Lewes Swift Supporters