



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

May 2023

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Welcome to our May edition of the newsletter from Lewes Swift Supporters! After a slow and quiet start, we are now starting to see larger numbers of our favourite screaming aerial acrobats!

Nest activity so far in 2023

At the time of writing, our surveys and reports from Swift Watchers have confirmed that Swifts have returned to **43 nest spaces** in Lewes. This compares very well to the same time in 2022, when our final total was 79 nests.

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

- Upper Western Road – 5 nests
- St. Anne's Church – 4 nests
- Valence Road – 2 nests
- Rear High Street, (top of St. Swithun's) – 3 nests
- The Maltings – 6 nests
- De Montfort Road - 2 nests, (one in a box)
- Market Lane - 1 nest
- Gallows Bank - 1 nest
- King Henry's Road – 1 nest
- St. Martin's Lane – 1 nest
- Station Street – 4 nests
- Bridgewick Close – 1 nest
- Southover High Street – 3 nests, (2 in a double box)
- The Avenue – 2 nests
- Flea Market – 7 nest nests

Well done to all our surveyors and Swift Watchers!

Here are some marked photographs from our surveyors which show the positions of the nest entrances recorded in 2023 at some of our more public colonies.



Station Street



The Maltings



St. Anne's Church – East



St. Anne's Church – West



A close -up of nest 2 at the church to show you the space where the Swifts enter.



The rear of the Flea Market

Swift Cam News!

In April, we visited the attic of the house in King Henry's Road to clear rubble from potential nests entrances and add cabinet style fittings to enclose the nest space. We also adjusted the camera to hope for a clearer view of the Swifts which have nested under the eaves for several years.



Kevin and Nick with the finished cabinets

On Sunday 30th April, the alarms were going wild on our phones to alert us to the arrival of the first Swift in King Henry's Road! The second Swift joined it on 4th May. Their first egg was visible on 12th May, and a second egg on 14th May. If all goes well, we should be able to share photographs of the fledglings as they develop!

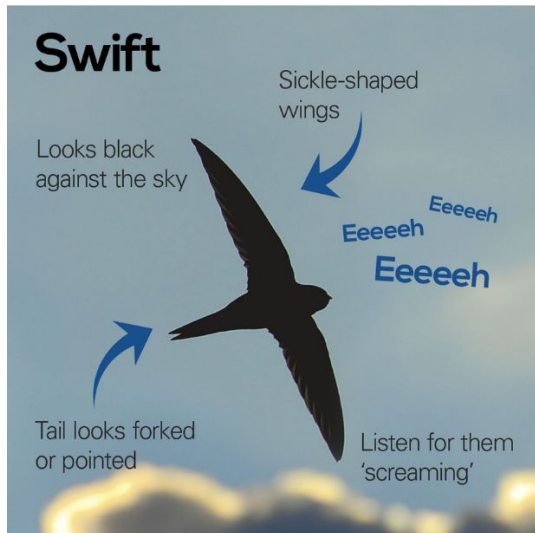
It is interesting that, up until now, nobody has actually seen a Swift enter or leave the nest space – we only know they are there because of the nest cam. It makes us wonder how many other Swifts might already have returned to their nests but not yet been spotted as they fly in or out.

This is where Swift Watchers are so valuable – you might be able to see the rear of a building or walk past a colony at a different time of day to our surveyors and report it to us. Six of the active nests recorded this year were first spotted by Swift Watchers!



One of the Swifts incubating the eggs

Swift Watch



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 day is celebrated in more than 50 countries, on all continents, and includes all the different Swift species of the world. The aim of the World Swift Day 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 1st July to 9th July. As in previous years, we plan to organise three evening walks around some of the Swift colonies in Lewes on Saturday 1st July, Wednesday 5th July and Saturday 8th July. Look out for details of how to book a place on one of the walks!

Helping Swifts

Lewes Swift Supporters have helped residents and businesses in Lewes to install 140 nest boxes, with more coming soon! Not everyone has a home which is suitable for a nest box and there are other ways in which you might help these, and other, red-listed birds.

We work closely with Wildflower Lewes to create green stepping-stones across the town to make bigger, better, and well-connected habitat for the insects and invertebrates that Swifts depend upon for their food. The latest Wildflower Lewes project is the High Street Pollinator Corridor – encouraging residents, shops, and businesses from Nevill Road to South Street to host a trough, planter, pots, window box or hanging basket of wildflowers. This will look wonderful to us – and at the same time provide valuable food and habitat for our pollinators.



Lewes Swift Supporters were pleased to support this project and sponsor one of the planters outside School Hill Surgery. The wildflower plugs and seeds have grown considerably since they were first planted in April, (see *photograph*).

If you live or work on the High Street and can contribute to the corridor, please let Lesley Healey know: lesleyhealey267@gmail.com

Contact Lesley if you would like to join Wildflower Lewes and help to monitor wildflowers on the verges and open spaces already established by Wildflower Lewes.

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)

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 2023



**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