



The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

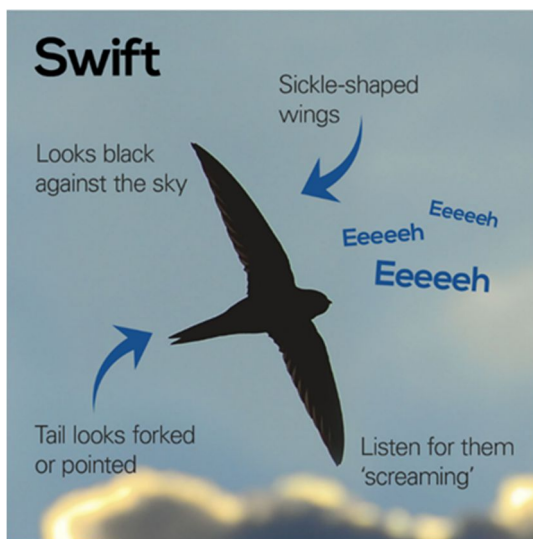
May 2024

Dear Lewes Swift Supporters,

Welcome to the May edition of the newsletter from Lewes Swift Supporters! We now have over 300 people who are registered to receive our newsletters. If you have a friend or neighbour who might be interested, please do forward the newsletter to them. The more people who know about Swifts and why they need our help, the better it is for them!

Swift Watch

As we have come to expect, the experienced breeding Swifts returned quietly to Lewes at first but in the past week we are beginning to see and hear more of their magnificent screaming parties and fly-pasts. Thank you to all you who have sent in your sightings already! You may be able to see a site that our surveyors cannot easily see from the street. For example, the nests at the rear of Southover High Street and at Westfield House were confirmed this year thanks to reports from our Swift Watchers.



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
- X/Twitter: @LewesSwifts
- Email: lewesswifts@gmail.com

We will keep you informed about our Lewes Swifts via the same methods and in our 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.

Nest activity so far in 2024

At the time of writing, our surveys and reports from Swift Watchers have confirmed that Swifts have returned to **36 nest spaces** in Lewes.

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

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

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 2024 at some of our more public colonies.



Station Street



The Maltings



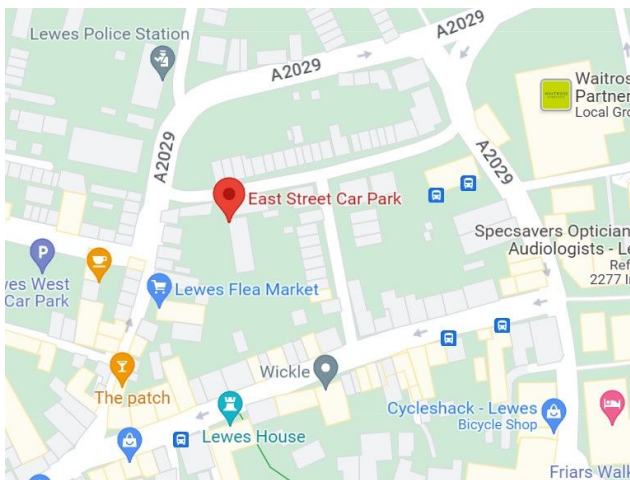
St. Anne's Church – East



St. Anne's Church – West

Swift Awareness Week

This year Swift Awareness Week is from 29th June to 6th July. As in previous years, we will lead three evening walks around some of the Swift colonies in Lewes on Saturday 29th June, Wednesday 3rd July and Saturday 6th July. The walks will start at 8.00 p.m. from the East Street car park at the rear of the Flea Market and end in Western Road.



We will be walking at a gentle pace around the streets of Lewes.

To book a place on one of our Swift walks, please send an email to lewesswifts@gmail.com and let us know your preferred date and a second choice of date if possible.

If the weather is not suitable, we will send out a message by 6.00 p.m. on the day.

Celebrating Swifts at Lewes Climate Hub

It was a pleasure to meet several of our members in person at the “Celebrating Swifts” events which we hosted at Lewes Climate Hub from 24th April to 4th May. Visitors had the opportunity to make a flying Swift, have a go at our Swift Quiz and add to our “Taking Steps for Wildlife” collage.



Flying Swift



Swift Quiz



Adding a footprint to our collage

On Saturday 27th April, we were fully booked for the talk by Edward Mayer from Swift Conservation, <https://swift-conservation.org/>. As you may expect, it was brilliant. He framed the talk around the idea that Swift numbers are an indicator of general biodiversity – where numbers of Swifts are low it is a prompt towards nature recovery to benefit all animals and plants. For example, he promoted planting native species of flowers and trees to offer natural food and habitat, providing clean untreated water and banning biocides. Visit our website page for more ideas about how to help Swifts:

<https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/helping-swifts/>



Edward Mayer talking about supporting Swifts

The “Taking Steps for Wildlife” season continues at Lewes Climate Hub, 32 High Street, Lewes, and you may be interested in the upcoming “Bees of Sussex” and “Tremendous Trees” events.

The “Bees of Sussex” events include making a minibeast home, a talk from local naturalist James Power, “Ten Sussex bees and the stories they tell”, and a chance to explore the gardens of Lewes House with Jan Knowlson, SDNP Biodiversity Officer, to record pollinators using the i-Naturalist app.

“Tremendous Trees” events include making a tree medallion to celebrate the wildlife which depends on trees, making wooden flower decorations, having a go at a tree quiz for a chance to win a £25 garden token, and a talk by Keith Sacre, arboriculturalist, “Trees for your garden and how to look after them.

To find out more, visit: <https://lewesclimatehub.org/taking-steps-for-wildlife>

Helping Swifts in Lewes

So far, Lewes Swift Supporters have helped residents and businesses in Lewes to install 191 potential new nest spaces, with more coming later this month!

If you live in Lewes and are thinking of installing a Swift nest box or an artificial House Martin cup, this is how we might support you – if your building proves to be suitable and there is access for a long ladder.

- Funding a Swift box and the installation when someone lives next to an existing Swift colony.
- If you do not live next to an existing colony, we still offer support and advice on installing a Swift nest box. We visit the homeowner to find out if the building and location are suitable and help to decide on the best place for a box. At current prices, this would cost you £48 for a single box and £25 for the installation. See: <https://www.peakboxes.co.uk/shop>
- A free House Martin cup and installation for anyone who lives in a suitable location in an existing colony so that we might encourage expansion of the existing colony.

Just get in touch with us if you are thinking of installing a Swift Box or an artificial House Martin cup:

lewesswifts@gmail.com

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 2024



**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/)

X/Twitter: @LewesSwifts

Facebook Group: Lewes Swift Supporters