



# The Supporter

Newsletter for Lewes Swift Supporters

May 2026

Dear Swift Supporters,

Welcome to this update on our Lewes Swifts!

## Swift update

First of all, here is a record of the sites where nest entrances or exits have been recorded so far in 2026. We have recorded **17 different nest spaces** visited by Swifts - and you may be able to add to this total.

The dates below show the first time that a Swift was seen entering a particular nest space in 2026 and 2025. However, they may have arrived back in Lewes before the date shown!

Swift site/colony	2026 records – number of nest entrances	Date of first recorded entry in 2026	Date of first recorded entry in 2025
Upper Western Road	3	30 <sup>th</sup> April	28 <sup>th</sup> April
St. Anne's Church	2	9 <sup>th</sup> May	3 <sup>rd</sup> May
Valence Road	1	7 <sup>th</sup> May	30 <sup>th</sup> April
High Street, newly discovered nest entrance	1	9 <sup>th</sup> May	N/A
Top of St. Swithun's Lane, (rear of High Street)	2	25 <sup>th</sup> April	28 <sup>th</sup> April
The Maltings	1	5 <sup>th</sup> May	9 <sup>th</sup> May
King Henry's Road	1	9 <sup>th</sup> May	25 <sup>th</sup> April
De Montfort Road	3 (in boxes!)	1 <sup>st</sup> May	19 <sup>th</sup> May
The Avenue	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> May	13 <sup>th</sup> May
Station Street	1	9 <sup>th</sup> May	12 <sup>th</sup> May
Bridgewick Close, Malling	1	4 <sup>th</sup> May	17 <sup>th</sup> June

To see a map showing where we have seen Swifts entering nests in Lewes, click [here](#), or visit our website page: <https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/swift-diary-2026/>

It is brilliant news that three of the Swift nest boxes that we installed in De Montfort Road are being used again – for the second or third year. We like to think that this means that Swifts are beginning to become accustomed to nesting in a box. We have installed 214 Swift nest boxes so far and we are keeping records of any bird that is seen using them. As we know, where Sparrows use a Swift nest box, it can help to guide Swifts towards it. At the end of each season, we send our notes of nest box occupancy to Sussex Ornithological Society to add to their records.



*The moment just before entry at one of the boxes in De Montfort Road.*

### **Swift events on Saturday 9th May**

Thank you to everyone who joined in to celebrate the return of our Swifts on our special Swift Celebration Day! About fifty people met us on the Railway Land Nature Reserve for our “Welcome back to the Swifts” parade up to Lewes Climate Hub.



*Gathering at the Railway Land Nature Reserve*

Before we set off Cllr. Adrian Ross, the Deputy Mayor, gave an eloquent speech to confirm the continuing support of Lewes Town Council for our Swift-friendly Town.

At Lewes Climate Hub, we welcomed 103 Swift enthusiasts throughout the day, where they explored our exhibitions, enjoyed refreshments, and had a go at making their own Swift badge. We swapped Swift stories with local residents and people from Guildford, Finland, and China! In China, if a Swift visits your house it is seen as a sign of good luck.



*The end of our parade at Lewes Climate Hub*

We had a full house in the afternoon for Edward Mayer's talk: "Keeping the Skies Alive – why we need Swifts more than ever". He shared umpteen fascinating facts about Swifts and positive approaches to meet the challenges that they face.



A few years ago, Sharon rescued a Swift, (pictured right), that had fallen down the chimney of her house and took it to East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service, (ESWRAS), for rehabilitation. Thanks to their care, she was able to join them when the full-grown Swift was released from Malling Down – a wonderful experience! We invited our visitors to donate a small amount to help to fund the vital work of ESWRAS – and we raised the fantastic amount of £93.20! Thank you, everyone!



## A Swift Quiz!



On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, we were invited to the Black Horse pub to join in with the quiz they had organised to raise funds for Lewes Swift Supporters. The room was full of Swift surveyors, volunteers, and regular quizzers, and between them they raised a magnificent £210. The quiz was great fun too!



Thank you very much to Declan, the landlord, and his team for this generous and thoughtful gesture.

## Swift Watch sightings and reports from our surveyors

There were several early sightings of Swifts over the last two weeks of April, possibly because of the warm, dry weather, and there were even some nest entries before the end of the month. With the cooler weather returning, the skies have become quieter but if you haven't seen any yet, don't despair – it is still very early in the season! To catch up on Swift activity regularly, do visit our Swift Diary 2026 page on our website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/swift-diary-2026/>

Here are marked photographs to show the nest entrance sites recorded at some of our known colonies.



*St. Anne's Church – two nest entrances used so far*



*First entrances recorded in Station Street and The Maltings*

## Nest box news

On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, we were joined once again by the wonderful Dave Boddington, Swift Champion for Sussex Ornithological Society, so that we could install three more Swift nest boxes and one more artificial House Martin cup.



*The Fosse*



*Abinger Place*



*St. John's Terrace*



*Winterbourne Close*

Lewes Swift Supporters funded the Swift boxes and their installation in Abinger Place and The Fosse because they are near known nest sites. We also funded the House Martin cup in St. John's Terrace – it is next door to a natural nest built by House Martins!

If you live in an area where there is an existing colony of Swifts or House Martins, or where there used to be, do get in touch if you would like a Swift box or House Martin cup installed at your home. When we

have the opportunity to expand existing colonies for these social birds, we are usually able to fund the boxes/cups and their installation if your property is suitable. Just contact us via [lewesswifts@gmail.com](mailto:lewesswifts@gmail.com)

## Behind the nest cam

Here are two photographs of the first Swift in the attic of King Henry's Road, from the nest cam in one of the nest spaces.



## Swift Watch

We are always very grateful to all the records sent to us by Swift Watchers. They add to our data collection and can help us to find new places where the Swifts are congregating and perhaps even nesting. If you can continue to send sightings throughout the season, even if they are from the same place as your previous sightings, that is helpful because it shows continued interest in a particular area.

### **What we would like to know:**

- Date
- Time
- Address of nearest property
- Number of Swifts
- What the Swifts were doing, for example, flying, screaming, or banging against a potential nest space.

## Nature Recovery season at Lewes Climate Hub

Our wonderful Swift Day was the first in a season of Nature Recovery events that we are organising at Lewes Climate Hub. They continue throughout May so do drop in and visit us! All the Saturday events are from 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May - **Hedgehog Day** – make a woodcraft Hedgehog with Rustic Tim, (£1), design your own Hedgehog badge, and at 1.30 p.m. hear Trevor Weeks from East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service talk about the challenges that hedgehogs face and how to help these adorable animals.
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – **Wildflower Lewes Day** – learn from Lesley Healey and other experienced wildflower growers and take home some plants for your garden or window box.
- Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May – Join **People's Park for Nature** for wildlife advice from 11.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., followed by a talk from Dylan Walker about why it is important to reintroduce lost species.

For more details, see: <https://lewesclimatehub.org/a-month-of-nature-recovery>

### **Get in touch or follow us:**

To report your Swift sightings, or to ask for advice about installing a Swift box or House Martin cup, you may contact us via:

- Email: [lewesswifts@gmail.com](mailto:lewesswifts@gmail.com)
- Facebook: Lewes Swift Supporters
- X: @LewesSwifts
- Instagram: @lewesswifts
- BlueSky: @lewesswifts.bky.social
- Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/lewesswiftsupporters/>

### **Spread the Word!**

If you have a friend or relation who might be interested in helping Swifts or learning more about them, please do share this newsletter with them. The more people who know and care about Swifts, the better their prospects will be! Do encourage people to sign up as a member and receive our newsletter and invitations to our talks and walks – a growing membership can also help us when we are making grant applications.

With best wishes from the LSS Committee:

Mike Ramsey, Chairperson and Surveyor  
Kevin Murphy, Recorder and Surveyor  
Sharon Hall, Treasurer  
Crispin Holloway, Founder Member  
Georgina Lee, Surveyor  
Russo James, Surveyor  
Loick Tyson, Surveyor  
Audrey Jarvis, Secretary, Surveyor and Communications

