**Winchcombe Swift Support Group (WSSG)**

**Guide to fitting Swift nest boxes and bricks to houses:**

1. Often a good place to fit swift boxes is gable ends although other walls are also OK.

2. Ideally the box should be 5 metres up or higher. Experience shows you can be successful in attracting swifts to boxes lower than this (4 metres).

3. The boxes should ideally not be south facing, however, if there is no other option the M30 Stimpson design with white PVC top (as made by WSSG) is judged acceptable. Item 9: At the end could you add WSSG makes and fits the M30 Stimpson box (box £20, box fit £10)

4. The boxes should not be near overhead wires.

5. The swift should have a reasonably clear flightpath to the box

6. There should be a gap (around 4 to 5 metres) between the wall on which a box is fitted and any adjacent wall or shrubbery.

7. Ideally the box should not be above a window or a door (although a window with closed curtains/ blinds should be OK).

8. Occupancy can be helped using swift calls – for more information contact Winchcombe Swift Support Group – Facebook page: Winchcombe Swift Support Group OR see <http://swift-conservation.org>

9. Swift boxes can either be self-made or purchased. There are some designs on the swift conservation site <http://swift-conservation.org>, including one made from a drainpipe. A swift enthusiast manufactures boxes for around £20 plus £10 postage (assembled), Contact John Stimpson via email: j.stimpson1@btopenworld.com or phone 01353 740451, the model you want is probably a Model 30 which has a sloping roof. He has been supporting swifts for many years and has apparently made over 20,000 boxes! WSSG can also provide guidance.

10. Swift (Universal) bricks

If you are wanting to fit a swift brick (the bricks are designed for lifetime use) to your house, the guidelines above are equally applicable excepting:

* it is best to fit to gable ends without windows and doors
* it is acceptable to fit to south facing gables/ walls because research has shown that there is a similar microclimate within a brick regardless of orientation

There are many swift brick designs, they cost from around £30 to £120. See Notes below. There is also the cost of builders fitting the brick, it should not take more than half a day. The WSSG can also give guidance on swift bricks. There is a lot of guidance on the <http://swift-conservation.org> website.

11. General

There is a lot of supporting information on the *Action for Swifts* website (<http://actionforSwifts.blogspot.com>) and the *Swift Conservation* website (<http://swift-conservation.org>). The WSSG can also advise.

A particularly useful document covering installation of swift bricks is <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/9.pdf>

**Notes on swift bricks**

(a) There are many manufacturers of swift nesting bricks covering standard and non-standard sizes (Ref 1). A swift brick which is the same size as a UK standard brick, has been designed in collaboration with the RSPB and made by Manthorpe. It replaces a standard brick and occupies the brick space and the insulation space behind it. It is designed for the lifetime of the building.

(b) Single integral swift nesting bricks cost £25 to £160 each (Ref 2), the Manthorpe bricks cost around £35 to £45 each.

(c) Advice on fitting of the bricks can be obtained through the ‘Action for Swifts’ website.

(d) An RSPB funded study (Ref 2) showed there was no public antipathy to swift nesting bricks on new houses.

(g) Evidence shows that the swift nesting brick is attractive to many bird species. Monitoring of over six hundred bricks on housing estates (Ref 3) has shown around 50% occupancy: other birds using the bricks are house sparrows, starlings, blue tits and great tits. As a consequence the swift brick is now considered to be a *universal* brick.

**References**

1. Facts about Swift Bricks (Newall 2019a) – Downloaded from Action for Swifts website (tinyurl.com/swift bricks)

2. CIEEM Biodiversity Net Gain, Issue 104, June 2019 (<https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/9.pdf> )

3. Duchy Report on the Big Duchy Bird Box Survey 2020 by Dr Thais Martins See <http://swift-conservation.org>

WSSG September 2021