

The swifts have been back for a month now and our group has been busy identifying nest sites. We have been out each Thursday evening to see which buildings they are using for nesting and apart from one damp week when there did not seem to be any birds around we have discovered new nesting sites each week. These sites are now being marked on a map of the town and I am sure there are still many more to be identified. The key to successful nest site spotting is to be out just as the sun sets and to watch the birds circling round. Just as the last light disappears so do the birds as they make a dive for their nests – they can be hard to see but we are becoming more proficient at seeing dark birds flying at high speed disappearing into dark buildings!



If you have not been out on a Swift Watch with us yet then do think of coming to join us. We have a regular group of 8-9 but the more people who come out the more places we can investigate. We are meeting at the Buttercross at 9pm each Thursday.

If you are not able to come out with us please email or phone with locations of swift nests that you are aware of.

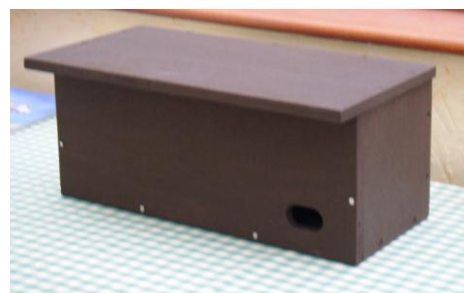
The above photo shows birds flying in Lincoln – but it could just as well be Ludlow.

Rockspring Open Day

The South Shropshire Furniture Scheme has recently taken on the running of the Rockspring Community Centre in Sandford Road. To mark the occasion the centre held an Open Day on 2nd of June and the swift display boards were again on show. We know that there are several houses on the Sandpits estate that are used by swifts for nesting and we also hope to install a swift box on the Centre as a way to raise awareness of the population that use this part of town.

Ludlow Town Council

We are pleased to be working with Ludlow Town Council who have commissioned swift boxes to be built by Skillbuilders. The boxes have been delivered to the Council and will be installed in suitable location when the correct equipment e.g. cherry pickers are being used for other work.



Contact swifts@ludlow21.org.uk or phone 01584 876818

See www.ludlow21.org.uk

St Laurence Conservation Trust Weekend



Phil with the display boards and, on the floor, the stock of boxes for sale

The weekend of 21st and 22nd May saw the green outside St Laurence's covered in marquees for the first Conservation Trust weekend. There was a wide range of displays – amongst which was the Swift Conservation Group. Our display boards drew a lot of interest and Peter, Robin, Graeme, Phil and Peta were on hand throughout the weekend to talk to people about swifts. As well as Ludlow residents there were a number of visitors from other parts of the country who talked about their swift population. As well as recruiting some new members for our group we sold a number of swift boxes and swift call CDs. In all it was a very successful weekend for raising the profile of swifts in Ludlow.

Swifts in Swifts

The display boards are once again in action – this time in Swifts the Bakers in Parkway. With a name like that we really couldn't miss the opportunity and Robert Swift was very keen to work with us to host the display which we hope will be able to remain in place once the bakers have moved to their new premises in Corve Street. Also - those taking part in the mini Magna Longa on Sunday 12th June will be able to read the boards and pick up the leaflets as they enjoy their tasty pastry course.



Scaffolding City

There was certainly the feeling that Ludlow had hired much of the country's scaffolding supplies when the works were done in King Street earlier this year. But although that work has now finished there is still a lot of scaffolding around – and scaffolding means roof work and roof work means potential loss of swift nest sites. So it is very important to talk to people who have scaffolding erected – or the builders who are doing the work – to make them aware of swifts.

Any scaffolding and roof repairs at this time of year are particularly worrying as swifts may be nesting. **Please find the time to talk to owners and builders when you see scaffolding on a building – the swifts we have seen nesting have all been in old buildings with small holes that are “unimproved” and we must work hard to maintain that environment for them in Ludlow.** I have copies of the leaflets provided by Edward Meyer from Swift Conservation that contain very useful advice for builders and homeowners. If you need copies of these to hand on please let me know – or else download them from the website <http://www.swift-conservation.org/>

Some Swift news from elsewhere in the UK

The 2 news items below have been taken from the Swift Conservation website <http://www.swift-conservation.org/news.htm>

The National Archives at Kew have installed some Swift nest boxes!



An employee contacted Swift Conservation who did a site survey and recommended locations and techniques to attract the Swifts.

Situated right by the Thames the site is ideal; it already hosts a good selection of wild birds and other creatures, and has pools and gardens of its own to shelter them.

WWT puts up Swift Boxes on its Tower Hide at the London Wetlands Centre



Swifts should love these nest boxes built beneath the eaves of the Tower Hide at the London Wetlands Centre just across the Thames from Hammersmith.

The pools of the Wetlands Centre provide masses of flying insects for Swifts to feed on, and many Swifts already visit the Centre just to feed.

You can just see two of the nest boxes fitted to the Tower Hide