

Supporting Swifts – What can go wrong?

It is easy to put up some nest boxes – but will Swifts ever use them?

This talk identifies issues and problems that need to be handled correctly and solved if Swift nest place projects are to have a good chance of success.

There are many pitfalls and problems to overcome. The built environment where Swifts nest is changing so rapidly, with so many older buildings being demolished to make way for new ones, that few people can remember what their towns and cities were like just a few years ago. And new buildings invariably cannot host Swifts unless specially adapted.

The rush to insulate and reduce power use is also making many existing buildings inhospitable to hole-nesting birds.

This places Swifts, a long-lived and nest-faithful bird, at a serious disadvantage in finding nest places that have some hope of longevity.

So new nest sites for Swifts have to be planned into the built environment with great care and attention to detail, or they will be lost, either from demolition or simple removal, or even decay.

The talk will cover many aspects, from choosing and siting the nest box, to considering local architecture styles for their suitability, assessing the immediate and more distant environment for hazards and the provision of needs, to assessing the local political and administrative situation to ensure long-term tolerance and support.

It draws on the collective experience of Swift enthusiasts over more than 20 years, to help us all to get Swift nest boxes and nest bricks into the places where Swifts will use them and thrive for years to come.

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