

Communities in Action



CASE STUDY: Wimborne Swift Group

Formed in 2023, Wimborne Swifts is a community group from the Wimborne and Merley area with a shared love of swifts.

Why do we care about swifts? Well, it's hard not to! These amazing birds spend most of their lives on the wing - they eat, drink and even mate in the air! Their top speed is 69 mph, and they fly incredible distances from their winter homes in Africa to breed and nest in the UK. They mate for life and return to the same buildings to nest each year. This spectacular bird, whose 'screaming' call is a signature of summer, however, is under threat from the loss of nesting sites - this is where Wimborne Swifts come in!

Coordinated by Terry, the Wimborne Swifts group are mapping swift and house martin nest sites, raising awareness of swifts in the community, and talking to the council, local businesses and churches about potential sites for locating swift boxes. Dorset Wildlife Trust is part of the Dorset Swift Network which is a partnership of organisations and groups with a common aim.

It's only been 18 months since we formed, but already there is a lot to celebrate:

Sam spoke about swifts on local radio, and we had a stand in Wimborne Square during Swift Awareness Week. Alison, from Merley Nature Group, designed a fantastic swift information leaflet and Martin has created a stunning logo.



Swifts © Nick Upton



Common swift returning to nest box with insects © Nick Upton

Brent has made 12 swift boxes with wood donated from a local joinery, which Merley Scout Group have assembled. We have received a grant from the Communities Swift Network Fund for more materials and we are hoping to get enough funds to buy a few bird callers to attract swifts to their new homes.

Becca has successfully convinced a developer on the site of the old Wimborne Market to install six double chamber swift boxes on the new buildings. Martin, Terry and Linda are speaking to owners of the taller buildings to see if they could become homes for swift boxes.

We are so lucky to share our neighbourhood with swifts and house martins - none of us want to stand by and watch these amazing birds disappear. It's fantastic to be part of a community group helping protect the iconic sight and sound of screaming summer swifts!

If you would like to find out more about this group, please contact wimborneswifts@gmail.com