

Summary of Swifts in the Community Meeting 15/9/14 – Leighton Moss

1. Group Report

During the first part of the meeting a representative from each group provided a review of the progress they had made this year. Below is a summary including information provided by email from people who could not attend.

Location	Progress	Issues
Arnside	Previous main nest site areas re-surveyed. New ones located. Property owners contacted in most instances. Positive response from them and general public.	Educational Institute building renovation delayed till August and work completed to ensure nest sites affected as little as possible. More volunteers needed to cover the range of sites.
Silverdale	27 nest sites in 16 buildings identified. Project promoted via parish magazine and e newsletter. 7 property owners reported nest sites. Virtually all property owners contacted. Significant positive response.	One location had scaffolding erected but the swifts negotiated this. Nest boxes provided to one owner.
Burton	Previous locations re-surveyed. Some changes noted but generally about the same or slightly higher numbers reported.	One building had scaffolding erected which disturbed nesting. The Royal Hotel still remains undeveloped and its future unclear.
Carnforth	All previous nest sites re-surveyed and some new ones identified. Most property owners contacted or provided with a leaflet.	More volunteers would be useful.
Yealand	Single nest site monitored.	
Heversham	None surveyed but 12-18 birds observed in the sky above the school.	No progress via school contacts in terms of gaining approved access and assistance. Other channels to be explored for next year.
Milnthorpe	No survey done.	More volunteers needed.
Kendal	5 nest sites located and surveyed. No contact as yet with property owners.	Surveying of the vast expanse of Kendal limited by volunteer numbers. More needed.
Sedbergh	No survey done.	Requires leadership from within the Sedbergh community of those which have expressed interest.
Grange	45 nest sites identified within Grange with up two significant colonies and others in smaller	More volunteers needed. Hoping to try and encourage property owners with swifts to join in the surveying.

	<p>numbers. Some nests also identified in neighbouring villages Kents bank (5), Lindale (2), Allithwaite (9).</p> <p>Some householders approached but some still to be contacted. Generally positive feedback from many people</p>	
Warton	No report.	
Holme	No report	
Kellet	No report	

2. Data base recording and Data Protection

At the meeting last September the Access data base which was developed as a means of collectively storing all the nest site records provided by the volunteers was demonstrated. Some people present felt the level of information which it held could be in breach of the data protection act. A resolution from the meeting was to clarify this.

In the process of investigating the issue it was noted that the data bases used by the RSPB and Cumbria Biodiversity (Tullie House) all allow quite detailed information to be recorded including address details. It was also noted that taking photographs of the outside of buildings seemed to be on a par with what Google Earth does.

In the end the Data Commission was consulted and the help desk confirmed the following.

- Providing personal details such as name and contact details e.g. phone/email are not stored, there is no contravention of the DP act.
- Storing photographs of the outside of buildings is also not a contravention of the act.

Following this conclusion the data base will store detail, but will not hold names and contact details. It will include addresses and any pictures submitted. Names and contact details can be stored locally for personal use, so my advice is that if you do know details of some of the property owners and wish to hold on to them for future use, hold them in your address book. Any sent to me will be ignored and not stored.

One other option which could be arranged on a local basis is to ask for permission from the property owner to hold their contact details and explain the reasons why this would ensure we complied with the DP act.

3. Winter actions

- Swift data recording.

If you have not already provided this year's details I would be pleased to receive them. I will then use them to update the data base with this year's data. I would prefer to receive the data on the standard form as it makes it easier to enter the detail. However, if you have already recorded detail differently please send it, but it would be nice if we could standardize recording from next year.

Any photos you want to provide please provide in low resolution as this saves space. If you are not using photographic evidence please try and create a detailed description of the nest locations. This is important detail which could be essential if the property owner decides to initiate some building work. It also gives us an idea how much re-use and change there is to nest locations.

One issue which was not discussed but I had intended to raise was the recording of swift details on the RSPB system and also on Cumbria Biodiversity (Tullie House). Clearly our records, being as detailed and as complete as they are, represent high quality data. However, I personally don't want to enter details into three separate data bases, so my proposal for the time being is to leave the decision and action to the local group coordinators.

For those curious as to why we need our own recording data base, this is primarily because the existing ones (e.g. RSPB) do not provide the control, access or the depth of data required by the project. We particularly need to record exactly where the nest locations are, if advising the property owner, in the case of property changes, is it have any success. Ultimately the objective is also to make the details available to planning authorities and also to enable on line access and updating, although this could be some way off.

Action All/PM

- Web Site.

After some discussion no firm conclusion on the desirability or the practical use and creation of a web site was agreed. Lack of money was a prime aspect in the deferring of the issue to another time (however see fund raising below).

- Contacting local builders and architects.

Most of this action is still outstanding from last year. As builders are often locally based this is an action for the local volunteer groups. Please try and get the builders leaflets to as many local builders and contractors as possible during the winter period. Influencing what might go on next year during the

spring and summer starts by getting the message out whilst work is being planned. Once started it can be too late to change things.

My experience with the builders involved with Arnside EI indicated two important issues. First is their general lack of knowledge about swift specifics. The second is their willingness to co-operate and their concern about doing what they can to conserve swift nest locations. **Action All.**

- Liaise with local authority.

Action will be taken on this this winter, at least to start the ball rolling and see where it takes us. Experience from other parts of the country indicates it is highly dependent on how enlightened the local officers controlling planning and development are. A report is due to be produced for the AONB to assist in the planning process specific to this area. This involves both Lancaster Council and SLDC. Advice from the AONB office suggests that once this has been completed it will act as a useful lead into making a direct approach to the individuals responsible for local planning. **Action PM**

- Group presentation.

As the project gets better known, and as opportunities to promote it appear, some sort of presentation will be needed (one could have been used at the annual Arnside EI general meeting). **Action PM.**

- School Presentation

A potential source of promotion, particularly at a local level, is to encourage primary schools to get interested in their local swifts. Arnside and Silverdale are probably one of the two best potential sites for this approach to be tried, for which some sort of presentation aimed at primary schools would be needed. It was suggested that Carol Bamber, the schools liaison officer at Leighton Moss could provide assistance. **Action PM/CB.**

- Fund Raising

The existing funding from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund has been used up, but more funds will be needed in the future. Local community based funding opportunities will be explored (a follow up conversation with the AONB office has suggested that a new application to the Sustainable Development Fund might be possible). Possible use of new funding would

include additional pre-printed leaflets, funding web site production and creating a publication suitable for schools and young people. **Action PM.**

- Committee/Steering Group

I suggested that at some point the project would benefit from the establishment of a committee or steering group, not so much to share the project coordinator tasks as to ensure that the project benefit from a wider range of ideas and input. No progress made at the meeting.

- Re-design of leaflets.

No changes were suggested to the leaflets, but the possibility of a property owners update communication was discussed. This was prompted by the idea that as property owners are likely to consider, and possible be in the process of planning, building work for next summer during this coming winter, a reminder about taking account of their swifts might be appropriate before next Spring. This could also be used to promote the project locally, report on progress, invite locals to get involved without acting as volunteers and possible invite them to come and watch swifts during one of the evening surveys **Action PM to produce suitable document and review with local coordinators .**

4. Next Spring

The annual Spring meeting will be organized for next April at Leighton Moss.

This will re-launch the project for the coming year and will provide an opportunity to give an update on progress made during the winter and enable the project participants to meet up.

It will also enable the project to be re-promoted in the hope of attracting more volunteers. A number of other channels will be used to highlight the project. A slot in the AONB magazine has already been reserved for next Spring's issue and it is proposed to write a piece for the Gazette to be included in the environment section sometime next Spring. AR offered her expertise and advice in looking at other communication outlets. In general this emphasizes one of the most important actions to come out of this season's review which is to ensure that the active groups have sufficient volunteers i.e. that recruitment during the winter and next Spring is a significant priority. **Actions PM/AR.**

