

Summary of Swifts in the Community Meeting 22/9/15 – Leighton Moss

1. Group Report

During the first part of the meeting a representative from each group provided a review of the progress their group had made this year. Below is a summary including information provided by email from people who could not attend. The location personal listed below are those mentioned in the text. Many other people are active in each group.

Location	Progress	Issues
<p>Arnside</p> <p>Peter Moreton Jennifer Rae</p>	<p>Increase in number of volunteers. Volunteers assigned to known nest locations leaving PM/JR to investigate new sites.</p> <p>3 completely new sites discovered and surveyed. One from last year more thoroughly surveyed.</p> <p>Property owners contacted in most instances. Positive response from them and general public.</p> <p>Significant numbers of birds around until second week in August.</p> <p>EI stone gable (renovated last year) had at least 5 nest sites occupied indicating the renovation work had retained the nest sites.</p>	<p>Some volunteers unable to meet minimum commitment leading to unsurveyed/under surveyed locations (see below re. further comments).</p> <p>The site on the prom which is a series of flats (Inglewood Court), mostly owned by non Arnside residents, has planned maintenance scheduled for next June. Attempts have already been made to get this work done outside the breeding season and further communication during the winter months will back this up (see below for further comments).</p> <p>The project with Arnside Junior school did not happen despite securing the funding to do so. This was down to the stretched education resources at Leighton Moss. It is expected this will go ahead next year using independent free lance resources.</p>
<p>Silverdale</p> <p>John Webb</p>	<p>JW's communication in the parish mag. had resulted in recruitment of new volunteers and knowledge of new sites.</p> <p>Re-surveying had shown that all but two locations had been re-occupied. Silverdale numbers were now up to 20</p>	<p>The Crag Foot chimney might be earmarked for restoration under the Morecambe Bay partnership scheme to preserve important buildings/structures. Susan Bleakley needed to be</p>

Location	Progress	Issues
	<p>properties and about 40 locations. Resources were assigned to surveying the limestone chimney of the old pump house on the Warton side of Leighton Moss (Crag Foot). At least 9 nest sites were recorded and it was thought there may be more.</p> <p>The renovation work being undertaken by Holgates on the old hotel and adjacent buildings in Silverdale village centre had presented an opportunity to extend the number of nest sites. The management of Holgates had been approached and had been positive about putting nest boxes up/installing swift bricks. The resident's communication, providing information to the Silverdale residents with swifts in their property, had been well received.</p>	<p>contacted to discuss the issue.</p>
<p>Burton Bryan Yorke</p>	<p>This year 4 new sites were discovered at Clawthorpe Hall, making the total number of nest sites in the Burton area about 20.</p> <p>Birds arrived on about the 4th of May and most left 29/30th of July with a final pair still around on the 16th of August.</p> <p>Bryan was now regularly providing updates in the local Burton News magazine and had also established a blog which was also updated on a regular basis :</p> <p>(http://burtonswiftbirdstudygroup.blogspot.co.uk/)</p> <p>Whilst sites were lost last year due to a building having scaffolding erected during the breeding season, some news sites had appeared, so that</p>	<p>The Royal Hotel still remains undeveloped and its future unclear.</p>

Location	Progress	Issues
	numbers overall were about the same as last year.	
Carnforth Annabel Rushton Kevin Kelly	AR/KK had difficulties in co-ordinating their efforts due to job changes affecting their spare time. A new site had been observed in New St. Some sites were observed as not containing the same number of nest sites in previous years and a drop in the number involved in screaming parties was also noted.	
Yealand Brain Hancock	BH reported by email that the site next to his house in Yealand Conyers had 4 breeding pairs this year and that a house in Yealand Redmayne had two nest boxes occupied.	
Heversham Mike Warren	<p>MW reported on progress made with the Heversham site where dialogue with the site manager had been established. However, due to the sensitive aspect of the site, with teenage boarders occupying many of the buildings, it was difficult to survey the site at the appropriate time i.e. late evening. Permission was given to survey after school term had finished (last week in July) but for various reasons this proved to be unsuccessful.</p> <p>Up to 24 birds were seen flying around the school buildings towards the end of the breeding season.</p> <p>An additional volunteer (Hilary Robertson) who lives near to the school and has observed where swifts nest in the school buildings for some time, has offered to help next year.</p>	Plan a concentrated period of surveying with additional volunteers from other locations, if necessary, when school has finished at the spring/summer half term and after school has finished in July.
Milnthorpe	Start made by Arnside volunteers, but not a huge amount of progress made.	More volunteers needed.

Location	Progress	Issues
	Two buildings in the square/traffic lights area identified as nest site locations.	
<p>Kendal Ros Taylor</p>	<p>RT reported on the activity in her area (Heron Hill) where she has been observing several pairs of swifts using relatively modern dwelling houses. She reported also seeing what she believed to be prospecting swifts looking at various locations in the nearby houses. Her ambition is to look at trying to get swift boxes installed on some of the houses in the vicinity of the existing swift nest sites.</p> <p>Attempts to establish a bigger group of volunteers in Kendal has so far not materialized. Sue Madden attended the meeting with RT and has expressed an interest in joining the group.</p>	<p>Surveying of the vast expanse of Kendal limited by volunteer numbers. More needed and more support for those already active.</p> <p>Support for RT in getting local residents interested in having nest boxes installed.</p>
<p>Sedbergh Tanya Hoar</p>	<p>TH reported on a successful school project at Grayrigg village school. This included watching the swifts in the local church where there are 18 pairs. Next year they are hoping to put up some nest boxes.</p> <p>The fledgling Sedbergh group did manage to meet and 30 nest sites were surveyed involving 6 volunteers.</p> <p>Other successes included the installation of nest bricks in the extension to Sedbergh Community Hall, the installation of 30 nest boxes in Sedbergh, and the promotion of the Sedbergh swift group at various events and in various publications.</p> <p>Future plans included the installation of swift boxes on some schools in Sedbergh and at a church in Sedbergh..</p>	

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<p>Grange</p> <p>Martin Chadwick</p>	<p>Due to various circumstances MW's Grange team were less active than last year.</p> <p>Despite trying to gain feedback from the residents of properties in which swifts had been observed (letter/leaflet delivered before breeding season) Martin received no feedback.</p> <p>Three sites, Grand Hotel, Allithwaite and Orton Grange showed similar activity to last year. The last site had had roof work completed in the winter which had not appeared to affect the nesting swifts.</p>	<p>Reactivation of Grange group for 2016.</p>
<p>Warton</p> <p>Peter Stevens</p>	<p>PS has taken over at Warton but has been hampered by the lack of meaningful historical data from previous activity. He identified swifts using one property, a barn conversion with swift nest boxes and a sympathetic owner.</p>	<p>More activity required next year in conjunction with more support for PS from volunteers from other areas.</p>
<p>Holme</p>	<p>No report</p>	

Actions for the Winter and Next Spring

- **From Group Report**

- Communication with Inglewood Court management – **PM**
- Arnside School project – **PM**
- Communication with Susan Bleakley – **PM**
- Heversham group survey during school break – **PM/MW**
- Milnthorpe volunteers – **PM**
- Kendal nest boxes – **PM/RS**
- Kendal volunteer recruitment/organization – **PM**
- Grange volunteer revitalization – **MC**
- Warton volunteer support – **PS/JW**

- **Recording swift location information.**

All swift recording forms should be submitted before the end of the year. One possible development which is being explored from next year is to make the recording information accessible from the web site, with the possibility that information could also be updated from it. This would allow area coordinators to enter/update their own information.

Action – Group Coordinators/PM

- **Web site.**

The web site is now up and running. Some tidying up still to be done including the facility to post information such as a copy of this report.

- **Contacting Architects and Builders**

Architect contacts to be investigated along with approaching Local Authorities. Builder contact to be done at local group level.

Action – Group Coordinators/PM

- **Local Authority contact.**

Delayed until AONB joint planning initiative had been established with SLDC and Lancaster CC. Currently in contact with Lorraine Woodend at

SLDC and also asked to provide input into the AONB joint development plan document.

Action – PM

- **Group Presentation**

PM to talk at the Arnside EI AGM next year, by which time there should be Swift and Swifts in the Community presentation material created, which could be used for future presentations.

Action – PM

- **School Presentation**

Freelance education staff employed by RSPB approached and agreed to do the Arnside School project next year. Possibility to also fit in another one or two more schools, perhaps Silverdale and Burton. School/young person leaflet already largely developed (to be circulated for comment).

Action – All/PM

- **Fund Raising**

Funding for this year was secured from the Landscape Trust and the Barnes Trust. Due to the premature termination of the school project the whole of the money secured from the Barnes Trust was returned. The Landscape Trust grant has paid for a re-print of the general public and property owners person leaflet, web hosting and some initial work completed on the children's leaflet. The Landscape Trust grant should have covered the costs of developing the web site but this has been waived by the developer.

Next year the Barnes Trust will be approached to establish if they are prepared to support the Arnside School project. Initial enquiries from the Landscape Trust have indicated that due to the project asking for less funding from them last year than was initially anticipated, some funding is likely to be available for the coming year.

Potential funding requirements/options include the following.

- Data base updating from the web site.
- Ongoing web site hosting costs.

- New property owners pre-season leaflet (see below).
- More nest boxes (current stock almost gone).
- Arnside School project (deferred from last year)

Action – PM

- **Property Owners Pre-season Leaflet**

This requirement is based around reminding property owners about the need to think about swifts when planning future development/repair work. Last year 5 properties scattered around various places had work done during the breeding season. The disturbance and particularly the scaffolding prevented breeding in all the sites affected and this year birds failed to return to their previous sites. Lack of information precludes drawing any conclusions, but as we are not sure of the outcome, avoiding this type of situation seems to be the best course of action. The purpose of the leaflet is to act as a yearly reminder to the initial property owners leaflet originally delivered and could be accompanied by something like a letter personalized to the area in which the property resides. The plan is to have this available early in the before the year end with the intention of delivering it early in the New Year.

Action – Group Coordinators/PM

- **Increase Profile/Recruitment**

This year's efforts to increase the profile of the project and by doing so expand the number of recruits and possible surveying locations has produced mixed results. Whilst numbers continue to remain steady in the existing local groups and in some cases increase, particularly within the AONB groups, persuading new recruits to join especially in Kendal has failed to make much of an impact. There has also not been any recruits coming forward from new locations. All of this despite publication articles and promoting the project at talks given by Tanya Hoar to Kendal RSPB group and Lancaster Bird Group. The general conclusion was to allow the project to grow by word of mouth, through the regular April Spring meeting and appearance at local events such as the Arnside Apple Day. Nothing is specifically planned such as a publication article to promote the project. Please try and encourage anyone expressing interest to get involved, particularly in those areas where we have no volunteers or need additional.

Action – All

- **Surveyors Commitment**

The question was asked, is it reasonable to expect a minimum commitment from those volunteering to act as surveyors, particularly as their actions can determine the success or otherwise of a particular component of the activity within a particular location. The general consensus was that this was not an unreasonable expectation, but that the commitment should be well defined. AR offered to provide a sample job description for one of the RSPB's volunteer roles and MW offered to include a section in an up and coming Landscape Trust newsletter.

Action – AR/MW/PM

2. 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. It will also provide an opportunity to give an update on progress made during the winter and enable the project participants to meet up.

Action PM/AR.