

# SUPPORT OUR SWIFTS



Heyford Park School, Dorchester Living, the Heyford Makers Shed Group and The Cherwell Swifts Conservation Project have been working together with artist Kerry Lemon to design and build new swift boxes – small wooden boxes that provide a nest place for swifts during the summer months.



Following an alarming recent decline in swift numbers, the team were inspired to create the new swift boxes, which have been colourfully decorated by the school pupils and easily attach onto the side of a home.

The swift boxes are unobtrusive and easy to install (Dorchester Living can install the box for you), and in the future you may watch swifts coming and going around Heyford Park and learn more about these amazing birds!

If you would like to support these incredible birds by having a beautifully and locally made swift nesting box on your home, then **please email the artist Kerry Lemon [kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk](mailto:kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk)** with the subject line 'Swift Box Registration' with your name, address, email and phone number and tell us if you'll be installing it yourself or if you'll need help with this.

For more information visit: [www.kerrylemon.co.uk/exhibitions/80-swiftly](http://www.kerrylemon.co.uk/exhibitions/80-swiftly)

# SWIFT BOXES - FAQ'S



## WHEN WILL THE BOXES BE INSTALLED?

We'll start installing them in the summer 2024

## MY CHILD TOOK PART IN THE WORKSHOPS TO PAINT THE BOXES, PLEASE CAN I HAVE MY CHILD'S BOX ON MY HOUSE?

I'm so sorry but no, the boxes are a lucky dip but I promise they are ALL beautiful and once installed you can go on a tour of the neighbourhood to spot yours!

## HOW DO I INSTALL MY BOX?

Key things to take into account...

1. The box should be at least 4 metres high. For most bungalows this will mean it needs to be placed at the apex of the building.
2. It's important that the inside of the box doesn't get excessively hot. Aspects between east through north to west are ideal. On south-facing walls there should be some protection from the heat of the sun in the middle of the day, like an overhanging eave.
3. There should be clear access for the birds to fly into and out of the box; so no tall trees or other obstructions in the line of flight; also no buildings at first floor level below (at least not on a 2-storey building). This is because the swifts (and especially the young ones when they fledge) do not fly horizontally out of the nest. They can drop a considerable distance before gaining enough momentum to fly on the level.
4. Avoid installing a box immediately above a window.
5. Avoid places where predators might access the nest e.g. from plants growing up the wall close to the box.

AND... If you get really stuck, you reach out to Chris Mason at The Cherwell Swifts Conservation Project [candomason@outlook.com](mailto:candomason@outlook.com)

## I NEED HELP INSTALLING MY BOX - CAN DORCHESTER DO THIS FOR ME?

Yes, just let the Artist Kerry Lemon know [kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk](mailto:kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk)

## WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SWIFTS?

Swift Conservation - [www.swift-conservation.org](http://www.swift-conservation.org)  
Action for Swifts - [www.actionforswifts.blogspot.com](http://www.actionforswifts.blogspot.com)  
The RSPB - [www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/swift](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/swift)  
The Cherwell Swifts Conservation Project - [www.cherwell-swifts.org](http://www.cherwell-swifts.org)

## I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE HEYFORD MAKERS SHED GROUP WHO DO I CONTACT?

They're a friendly bunch and always on the lookout for new members. Please visit them on Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/makersshedhp](http://www.facebook.com/groups/makersshedhp) or email [secretary.heyfordmarkersshed@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.heyfordmarkersshed@gmail.com)

## HOW WILL THE SWIFTS KNOW THE HOMES ARE HERE?

Swifts spend the winter in Africa, they arrive in the UK from late April and leave in August SO the plan is get their home ready for Spring 2025. It might take them a bit of time to find your home but you can help let them know by downloading swift calls onto your mobile phone and playing their call from your top windows from mid-May next year.

## HOW ELSE CAN WE HELP THE SWIFTS?

**PLANTING FOR POLLINATION/ INSECTS** This is important because swifts feed entirely on a variety of insect species and tiny spiders that float on the air. Shortage of insects is one likely reason why swifts like almost all insect-eating birds are declining.

**WATER** The very best thing you can do in your garden is to make a pond, however small, because they are great for breeding insects. Swifts fly low over the surface of lakes and ponds to scoop up the water they need to live.

For more information and to request a swift box for your home, email [kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk](mailto:kerry@kerrylemon.co.uk) with the subject line 'Swift Box Registration' with your name, address, email, phone number and tell us if you'll be installing it yourself or if you'll need help with this.

