



idverde and the RSPB work in partnership in this area to increase biodiversity and engage the community about wildlife and the environment. We are seeking new community partners to support our ambitions.

Contact: Nicola Clarke @ [nicola.clarke@idverde.co.uk](mailto:nicola.clarke@idverde.co.uk) & Ross Bray @ [ross.bray@rspb.org.uk](mailto:ross.bray@rspb.org.uk)

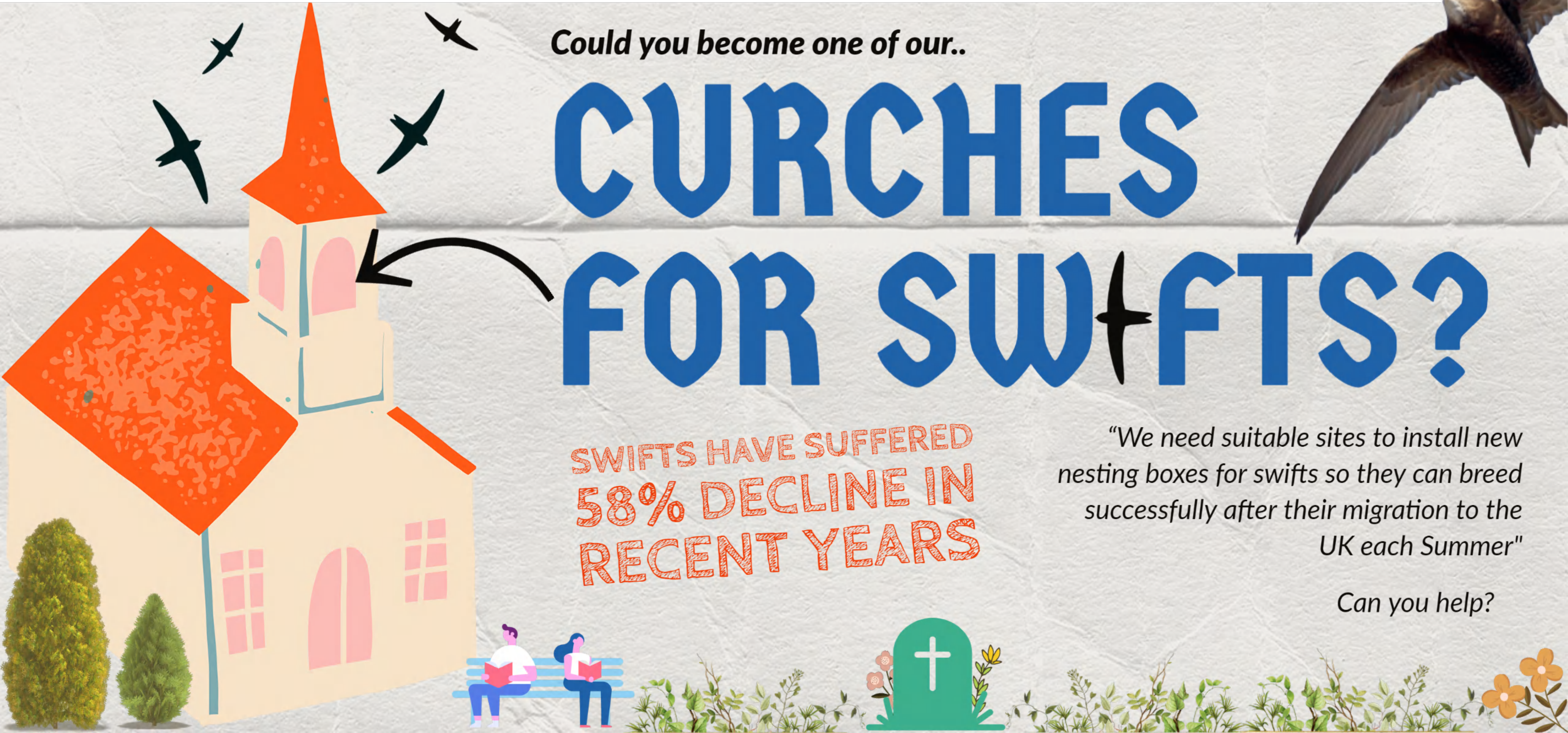
*Could you become one of our..*

# CURCHES FOR SWIFTS?

SWIFTS HAVE SUFFERED  
58% DECLINE IN  
RECENT YEARS

*"We need suitable sites to install new  
nesting boxes for swifts so they can breed  
successfully after their migration to the  
UK each Summer"*

*Can you help?*







“And high and high and high in the diamond light, they soar  
and they shriek in the sunlight when heaven is bare”



# WHY HAVE SWIFTS DECLINED 58% IN RECENT YEARS?

EXPANDING MODERN  
URBANISATION,  
LACK OF SECLUSION  
AND FOOD SOURCES



PESTICIDE  
USE LEADING  
TO LESS AVAILABILITY  
OF FOOD



MODERNISATION  
OF PREVIOUS  
NESTING SITES



CLIMATE CHANGE  
EFFECTING MIGRATION,  
BREEDING & FEEDING



DESTRUCTION  
OF OLD BREEDING  
AND FEEDING HABITAT

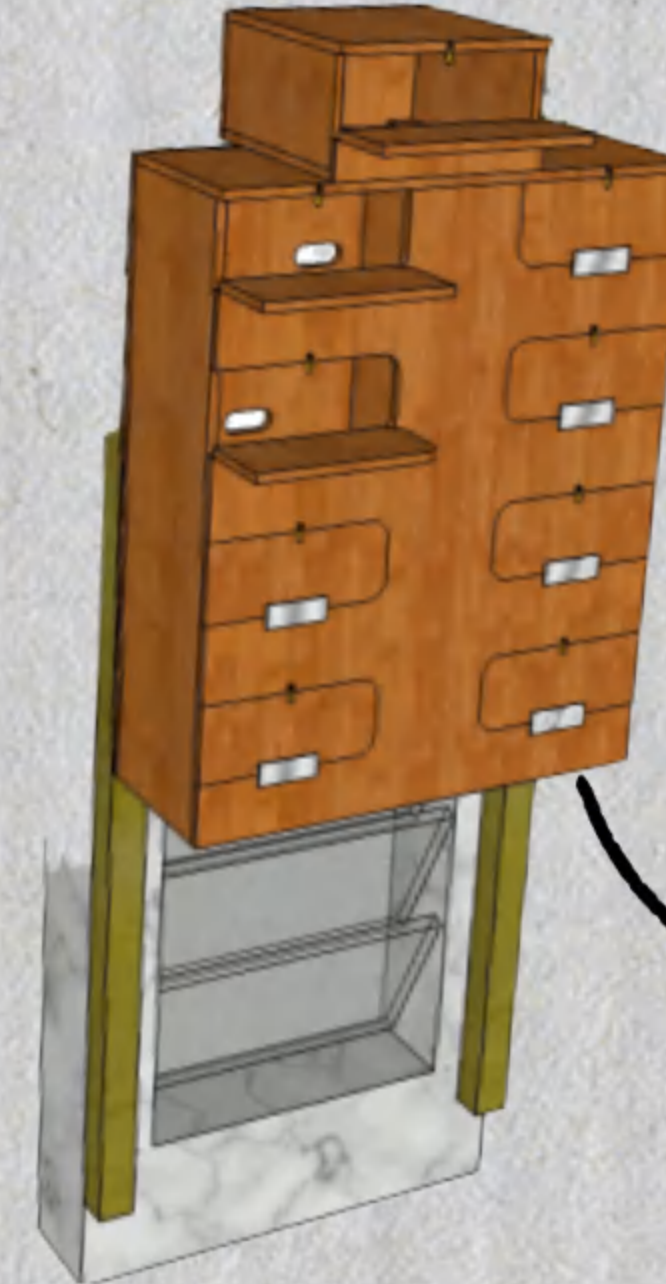


There are about 16,000 churches and chapels in England, many with a suitable belfry. This provides opportunity to significantly halt swift decline

NEST BOXES IN CHURCHES ARE PROVING TO BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL RESULTING IN SUBSTANTIAL NEW COLONIES



# HOW CAN WE HELP SWIFTS TOGETHER?



BOXES CAN BE DESIGNED TO FIT BY OUR VOLUNTEER NETWORK WITH FUNDING AVAILABLE



Church belfries are high and out of the way. They replicate the cliffs and rock faces once used to nest, so Swifts like these places

Louvres in front of the nest boxes provide the seclusion swifts prefer



BOXES ARE INSTALLED SYMPATHETICALLY TO STRUCTURE  
**UNDER AGREEMENT WITH PCC**

Swifts make very little or no mess





Nicola Clarke  
[nicola.clarke@idverde.co.uk](mailto:nicola.clarke@idverde.co.uk)  
07790 018 869



giving  
nature  
a home

Ross Bray  
[ross.bray@rspb.org.uk](mailto:ross.bray@rspb.org.uk)  
07483 096 460

## IF YOUR CHURCH WOULD LIKE TO HELP SWIFTS, HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NEXT..








Contact us to organise a site visit to see if nest boxes are feasible. An initial visit to explore potential should only need the permission of the warden or vicar. At this point basic measurements can be made, pictures taken and structure assessed.

Following our visit and the outcome of the assessment, permission to install nest boxes would need to be sought under "list B". In addition to the permission of the CPP, The archdeacon will also be consulted as to whether a faculty should be informed and consulted for the project.

If you are interested, please contact Nicola Clarke (Community Engagement Officer) and Ross Bray (Community and Nature Engagement Officer) who will be more than happy to help.

For examples and details of previous projects, take a look at some of these case studies;  
[actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk](http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk)

### *to do list*

-  *Contact the idverde/rspb partnership*
-  *RSPB/idverde visit belfry*
-  *Church asks for permission*
-  *RSPB/idverde construct nest boxes*
-  *idverde/partners install boxes*





Recent tracking studies have shown us that swifts can routinely fly tens of miles from their nest each day to find food.



Q: Do we need to attract the Swifts to the boxes?

A: Ideally, yes. Small battery or solar powered swift callers are available which play automatically in mornings and evenings

Q: Do attraction calls disturb neighbours?

A: As the belfry is so high, most people won't hear them. The calls cease once the colony is established.

Q: Do Swifts cause a mess in the church?

A: Swifts do not produce large amounts of white wash. They are very clean birds with adults eating chick droppings, so very little in the way of mess outside

Q: Will Swift boxes allow other wildlife and bats to enter the church?

A: As the boxes are sealed from the inside, no other wildlife can enter the building

# FAQ'S & FACTS ABOUT SWIFTS



Q: Will the boxes dampen the sound of the bells?

A: The boxes are only made of 12mm plywood and they do not cover all of the louvres, therefore dampening of the sound of bells is minimal

Q: Are Swifts affected by bell-ringing?

A: They are momentarily startled, but quickly settle down again. Often they do not react at all as they grow accustomed

Q: Will you be able to see the boxes from outside the church?

A: The exterior of the belfry is not affected. A dark stain can be used making them virtually invisible

Q: Do nest boxes need cleaning out at the end of summer?

A: It is not best practice, and ill advised to clean out nests as they need to use the material the following season. Swifts use minimal nesting material

ESTIMATED  
59,000  
PAIRS IN THE  
UK EACH YEAR





# WHY SHOULD WE HELP SWIFTS?

- ✦ Supreme flyers. To cross the Himalayas a Swift needs to fly at an altitude of 18700 feet!
- ✦ Jerusalem's Wailing Wall has for centuries been used by Swifts as a nest site. Laying their eggs in the same wall as worshippers who place their prayer notes to God
- ✦ Swifts provide a connection to nature for people and a deeper understanding of the ways in which the natural world works
- ✦ Once thought of as The Devil's Bird, that hibernated in mud, had no legs and were the screaming soles of the dead departing for hell
- ✦ Swifts nest almost only in pre-1944 buildings because of the techniques and materials used in modern buildings is not suitable
- ✦ They can catch over 300 insects to form a pellet called a bolus, which is regurgitated and fed to chicks
- ✦ They feed, drink, mate and sleep on the wing, only landing to breed. To travel vast distances they switch off half their brain at a time!

"One Swallow does not make a Summer - A Swift therefore is another matter"