

HIGH WEALD SWIFTS

England & Wales · Charity number 1204521

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2023-08-30

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 21 Woodfield Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 2LG

Phone 01732354161

Email trustees@highwealdswifts.co.uk

Website www.highwealdswifts.co.uk

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECT OF THE CIO IS TO PROMOTE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE COMMON SWIFT, APUS APUS, IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, MAIDSTONE AND WEALDEN, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY:(1) EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT COMMON SWIFTS AND IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE RAPID DECLINE IN THE COMMON SWIFT POPULATION, THE CAUSES OF IT AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT FURTHER DECLINE;(2) ENGAGING IN EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER SETTINGS;(3) UNDERTAKING SURVEYS OF NEST SITES;(4) IDENTIFYING AND PROTECTING EXISTING NEST SITES;(5) PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL NEST SITES, INCLUDING BY MAKING GRANTS; (6) PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING GROWTH IN THE POPULATION OF INSECTS, WHICH ARE THE COMMON SWIFT'S FOOD; AND(7) LIAISING WITH HOMEOWNERS AND OTHER LANDOWNERS, LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNERS, PROPERTY DEVELOPERS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO PROMOTE MEASURES TO HELP CONSERVE THE SPECIES.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- East Sussex
- Kent

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£3,348	£2,252	-	-
2024-12-31	£3,569	£2,356	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Cheryl Marie Mason		
Justin Francis Holmes		
Martin Robert Garwood		

HIGH WEALD SWIFTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1204521

Accounts



Annual Report
2025



Introduction

This Report covers the activities of High Weald Swifts in the calendar year 2025.

Constitution

High Weald Swifts is a charitable incorporated organisation and it has the registered charity number 1204521. It was incorporated as a charity on 30 August 2023. The charity's address is 21 Woodfield Road, Tonbridge, TN9 2LG. The trustees, who have remained the same since incorporation, are Martin Garwood, Cheryl Mason and Justin Holmes.

Aims

The objects of High Weald Swifts are “to promote for the benefit of the general public the conservation and protection of the common swift, *Apus apus*, in the administrative districts of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Wealden, in particular but not exclusively by: (1) educating the public about common swifts and in particular about the rapid decline in the common swift population, the causes of it and what can be done to prevent further decline; (2) engaging in educational projects in schools and other settings; (3) undertaking surveys of nest sites; (4) identifying and protecting existing nest sites; (5) promoting and supporting the provision of additional nest sites, including by making grants; (6) promoting and supporting growth in the population of insects, which are the common swift’s food; and (7) liaising with homeowners and other landowners, local authority planners, property developers and other organisations and individuals to promote measures to help conserve the species.”

Activities

Primary schools project

Over the year the charity continued its work with three primary schools in Tonbridge (Sussex Road Primary School, St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School and Slade Primary School). Martin Garwood and Justin Holmes visited St Margaret Clitherow and led lessons for Year 4 and 5 pupils about swifts and swift conservation. After initial concerns about planning restrictions, two swift boxes containing a total of three nest chambers were installed at the Slade Primary School.

West Malling

The Trustees worked closely with West Malling Parish Council and local volunteers. As a result, 8 swift boxes were distributed in the village, and several more were put up by local residents and businesses.



Lobbying developers and local authorities

Successes continue to be rare. The Trustees are hoping that they will be able to influence Vistry Homes to include swift boxes in its large forthcoming development in Pembury.

During the year Cheryl Mason raised the question of the incorporation of swift bricks into a new development in Ticehurst called Newington Court, and the developer agreed to incorporate swift and house martin nesting spaces.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

HWS trustee Justin Holmes participated in various workshops organised by Making Space for Nature, the body created to produce the Kent LNRS. He advocated for the inclusion of measures to conserve and promote urban wildlife, including swifts, in the LNRS.

We're pleased to say that the LNRS was published in November 2025, and that swifts are listed in it as a priority species. The strategy recommends the following principles for supporting wildlife recovery in the urban environment (URB2):

“Integrate year-round wildlife habitat, shelter, forage and food in new and existing developments by designing in, and retrofitting, features and landscaping that are maintainable, sustainable and appropriate to local species.

Features to support wildlife (all installed in accordance with best practice guidance) could include:

- Swift bricks
- House Martin artificial nest cups
- nest boxes
- bat tiles
- Hedgehog highways
- bug hotels
- reptile refuges.

Landscaping could include food plants, structural features for hibernation and overwintering, a mosaic of habitats and varied landforms and water features.

Particular priority should be given to Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species associated with the urban

environment, where the population is locally significant or species known to be declining.”

Appendix 3.1 of the strategy notes that there should be a focus on “increasing the number of breeding sites by provision of nest boxes and swift bricks”.

On its own, the LNRS will not be sufficient to increase the number of swift nest boxes, since it has only persuasive force, but the Trustees hope that when taken in conjunction with the government’s changes to National Planning Policy, the number of boxes included in new developments will increase.

Justin Holmes also provided comments on the Sussex LNRS, and publication of the final LNRS for Sussex is awaited.

Kent and Sussex Railway

Martin Garwood and Justin Holmes attended a “Green Fun Day” at the Tenterden station of the Kent and Sussex Railway. We advised the railway on possible locations for swift boxes, and the railway has acquired some boxes for erection on its carriage sheds at Tenterden.

Hawkhurst

Cheryl Mason organised surveys in Hawkhurst during the breeding season and identified a number of occupied nests. Residents local to the colony have been circulated and asked to indicate whether they would like to have a swift box, and there has been a positive response. Cheryl has also liaised with Hawkhurst Men’s Shed, and the shedders have offered to make swift boxes for us to our preferred design for the price of the materials involved. The first dozen swift boxes have been delivered and are of high quality, and we are delighted to be able to collaborate with them in this way.

Talks

All three trustees gave a number of talks to local organisations during the year, including the inaugural Tunbridge Wells Climate and Nature Fair, which is to be repeated on 3 May 2026. Further afield, Martin Garwood again volunteered on the swift stall at BirdFair.

The Trustees have also written articles in many local publications, including the *Tonbridge Town Crier* and the *Benenden Times*.

Answering individual enquiries

The trustees frequently receive requests for advice and assistance from members of the public, either via the internet or in person, and are always very happy to help.

Walk Tonbridge Guided Walk



Martin Garwood and Justin Holmes again led a walk organised by Walk Tonbridge to visit the house martin colony at Sussex Road Primary School and the swift colony in Woodfield Road. Participants donated £96 to the charity's funds and enquiries in relation to new swift boxes were received.

Liaising with other swift groups

The trustees continue to liaise with other swift groups in the region (as part of the RSPB's Kent for Swifts Group) and nationally through the Swift Local Network.

On 10 July 2025 Cheryl Mason and Martin Garwood attended a meeting organised by the High Weald Landscape Partnership to discuss swift conservation projects in Kent and Sussex.

Cheryl Mason also attended the SLN Conference in November 2025.

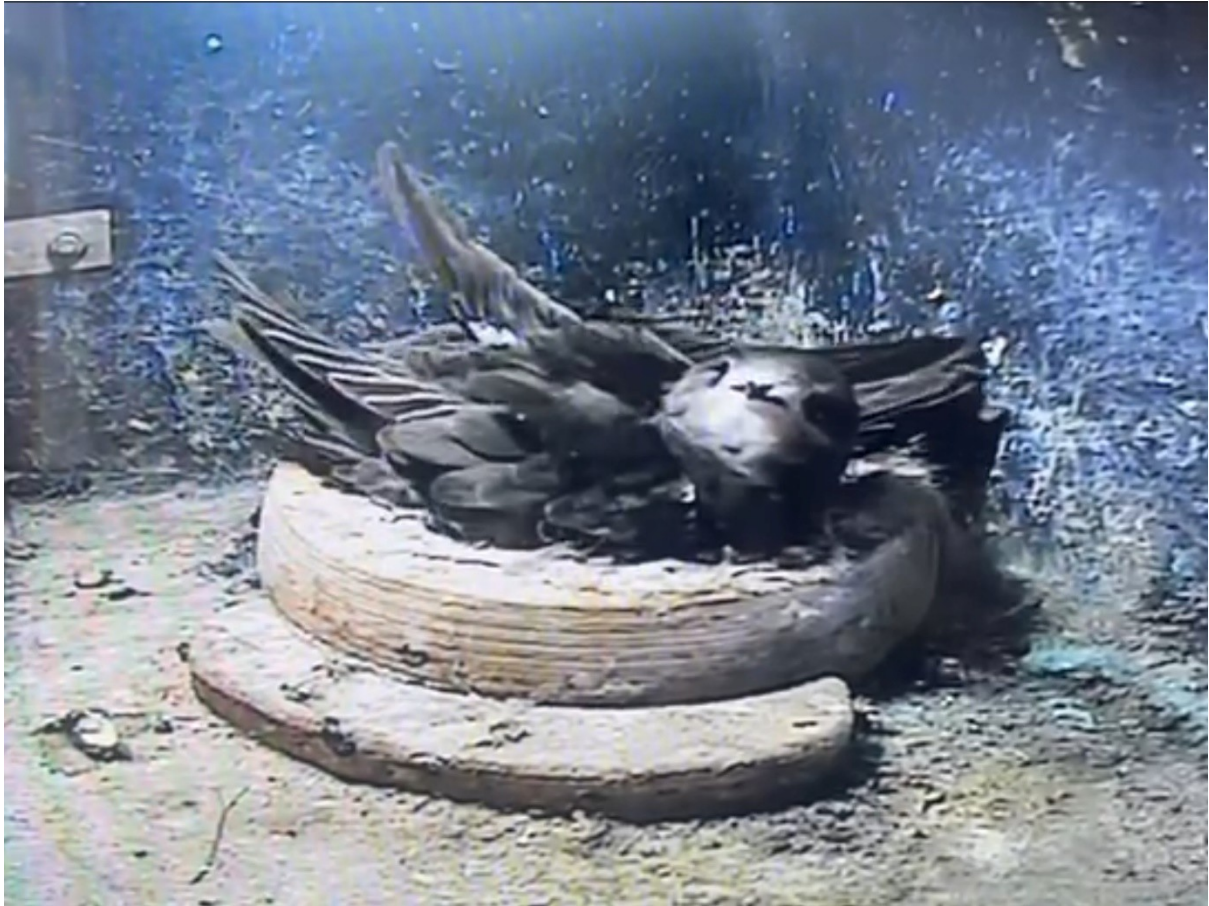
Stalls



During the year the trustees ran stalls at Cranbrook Goes Nuts In May, Goudhurst Fete, Hawkhurst Fete, the Tunbridge Wells Climate and Nature Fair, and Tonbridge Artisan Market. Once again, public engagement was encouraging and significant sums were raised from public donations. We have found on the stall that the main focus is on explaining the difficulties which swifts are facing, although often members of the public are understandably confused about the differences between swallows, house martins and swifts and we do our best to explain them.

Swift surveys

The trustees themselves undertook swift surveys and also encouraged supporters to do so. Survey results collected on Swift Mapper are proving to be invaluable evidence and we are encouraging supporters to use it whenever possible.



Achievements

The trustees estimate that approximately 50 new nest boxes will have been installed this year because of our work, and we have been able to spread the word about swifts and the ways in which we can help them to a substantial number of people. We have also attempted to influence future planning policy in Kent by our participation in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Finances

Accounts for the year are contained in an appendix to this report.

The trustees are grateful to those who have supported High Weald Swifts during the year.

High Weald Swifts

Registered Charity No. 1204521



Accounts

For the period from 1 January 2025 to 31
December 2025

Income and expenditure

Income

Donations	3,059.49	
Grants	0.00	
Gift Aid on donations	289.00	
Total income		3,348.49

Less expenditure

Swift boxes and equipment	1,521.60	
Publicity materials	207.93	
Postage	9.45	
Webhosting	294.00	
Bank charges	38.86	
Insurance	131.96	
Pitch fees	5.00	
Purchase of goods for sale	43.26	
Total expenditure		<u>2,252.06</u>

Net income		1,382.15
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Balance sheet

Assets

Bank balance:

Restricted funds: balance of Ten Percent Foundation grant	0.00	
Unrestricted funds	<u>2,478.58</u>	2,478.58

Swift boxes:

Action for Swifts Model 30: 6 @ £32	192.00	
Action for Swifts with bat back: 1 @ £50	50.00	
Swift brick: 2 @ £30	60.00	
Peak Boxes old-style: 4 @ £45	<u>180.00</u>	482.00

Total assets 2,960.58

Liabilities 0.00

Net assets 2,960.58

HIGH WEALD SWIFTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1204521

Accounts



Annual Report
2023-2024



Introduction

High Weald Swifts was incorporated as a charity on 30 August 2023, and this Report covers the first full accounting period of its operations as a charity.

Constitution

High Weald Swifts is a charitable incorporated organisation and has the registered charity number 1204521. The charity's address is 21 Woodfield Road, Tonbridge, TN9 2LG. The trustees, who have remained the same since incorporation, are Martin Garwood, Cheryl Mason and Justin Holmes.

Aims

The objects of High Weald Swifts are “to promote for the benefit of the general public the conservation and protection of the common swift, *Apus apus*, in the administrative districts of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Wealden, in particular but not exclusively by: (1) educating the public about common swifts and in particular about the rapid decline in the common swift population, the causes of it and what can be done to prevent further decline; (2) engaging in educational projects in schools and other settings; (3) undertaking surveys of nest sites; (4) identifying and protecting existing nest sites; (5) promoting and supporting the provision of additional nest sites, including by making grants; (6) promoting and supporting growth in the population of insects, which are the common swift’s food; and (7) liaising with homeowners and other landowners, local authority planners, property developers and other organisations and individuals to promote measures to help conserve the species.”

Activities

Primary schools project



Over the year the charity has worked with three primary schools in Tonbridge (Sussex Road Primary School, St Margaret Clitherow Roman Catholic Primary School and Slade Primary School). Nest boxes and caller systems have been supplied and installed at Sussex Road and St Margaret's, and arrangements are being made for a visit to St Margaret's to make a presentation to the pupils about swifts and swift conservation. Our efforts to install swift boxes at the Slade have not yet been successful, largely because the school lies in a conservation area and it has not been possible to obtain any definitive guidance on whether the installation of a swift box would be in breach of the conservation area regulations.

The success of this project is encouraging and in the financial year 2025 the trustees may consider expanding it to other schools in the charity's area.

Trinity Arts Centre, Tunbridge Wells

Martin Garwood continued to support the Trinity Arts Centre in Tunbridge Wells, where swift boxes have been installed in the tower.

Cranbrook School



The trustees had already developed a relationship with Cranbrook School when, in January 2024, the charity received a substantial donation from the funeral collection of a late resident of Cranbrook via Edward Mayer. The donation was used to purchase nest boxes and a caller system for installation at the school, and Martin Garwood followed that up by leading a walk with the school's Ecology Club.

Lobbying developers and local authorities

This is work which the charity's trustees undertook prior to the charity's formation, and it continues, although successes are rare. Cala Homes, the developer of a substantial new housing estate on the south-western edge of Tonbridge at Haysden, has agreed to include 8 nest boxes, although this is some way short of being one nest box per dwelling. Shanley Homes, the developer of housing at River Walk in Tonbridge, have agreed to install some swift boxes in the development. Liaison with local Councillor Mark Hood of the Green Party has contributed the imposition of a condition on the redevelopment of the River Centre car park that the development include swift boxes.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

HWS trustee Justin Holmes participated in various workshops organised by Making Space for Nature, the body created to produce the Kent LNRS. He advocated for the inclusion of measures to conserve and promote urban wildlife, including swifts, in the LNRS.

Justin Holmes also provided comments on the Sussex LNRS.

Talks

All three trustees gave a number of talks to local organisations during the year, including the Kemsing Wildlife Group, the RSPB, Horsmonden Women, Bearsted Climate Action Network, and a community group in Ticehurst. In July Martin Garwood and Justin Holmes spoke to an informal cluster of local farmers. Further afield, Cheryl Mason gave a talk in Margate in June, and Martin Garwood volunteered on the swift stall at BirdFair.

Answering individual enquiries

The trustees frequently receive requests for advice and assistance from members of the public, either via the internet or in person, and are always very happy to help. Enquiries have been received from individual house holders, a wildlife group in Sevenoaks, Frittenden and Staplehurst churches, and Bearsted Climate Action Network, who are at the beginning of a possible project to install swift boxes at Bearsted station as part of a Community Rail Project.

Walk Tonbridge Guided Walk



Martin Garwood and Justin Holmes led a walk organised by Walk Tonbridge to visit the house martin colony at Sussex Road Primary School and the swift colony in Woodfield Road. The event was oversubscribed and the participants donated £104 to the charity's funds.

Stalls

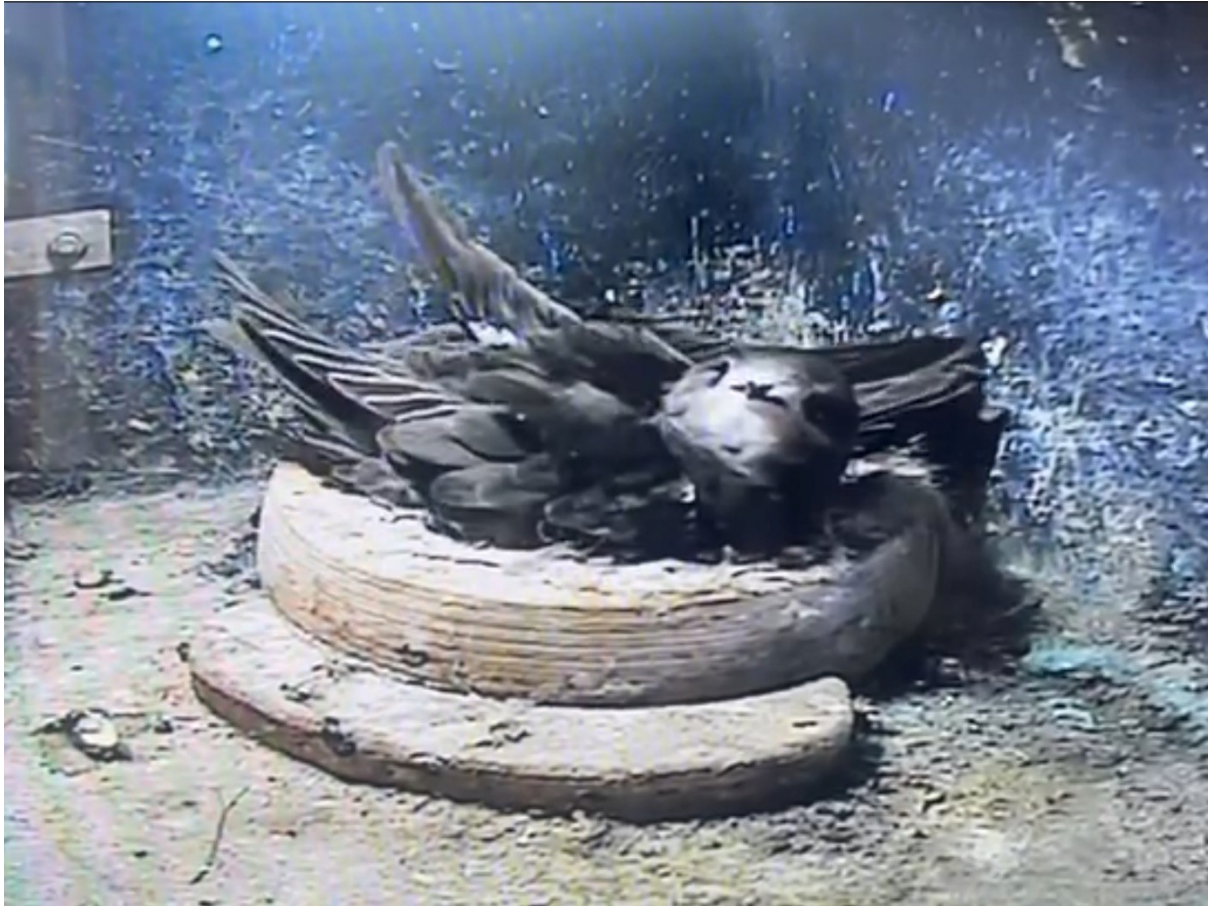


During the year the trustees ran stalls at Cranbrook Goes Nuts In May, Goudhurst Fete and the Pantiles market (the latter during Swift Awareness Week). Public engagement was encouraging and significant sums were raised from public donations. The trustees are looking at enhancing the range of items available for members of the public to buy, whilst continuing to concentrate on encouraging the installation of nest boxes.

Next year, if Tonbridge Calling is being held, the trustees would aim to repeat their successful attendance. If not, the trustees will consider whether to take a stall at one of the other market events held in Tonbridge during the year.

Swift surveys

The trustees themselves undertook swift surveys and also encouraged supporters to do so. An online form for reporting survey results has been developed and shown to work successfully, and volunteers conducted surveys for us in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.



Achievements

The trustees estimate that approximately 20 new nest boxes will have been installed this year because of our work, and we have been able to spread the word about swifts and the ways in which we can help them to a substantial number of people. We have also attempted to influence future planning policy in Kent by our participation in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Finances

Accounts for the year are contained in an appendix to this report.

The trustees are grateful to those who have supported High Weald Swifts during the year.

High Weald Swifts

Registered Charity No. 1204521



Accounts

For the period from 1 September 2023 to 31
December 2024

Income and expenditure

Income

Donations	1,751.32	
Grants	1,700.00	
Gift Aid on donations	117.26	
Total income		3,569.08

Expenditure

Swift boxes and equipment	957.05	
Publicity materials	656.11	
Postage	18.15	
Webhosting	444.20	
Insurance	63.42	
Pitch fees	48.00	
Total expenditure		2,186.93

Net income		<u>1,382.15</u>
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Balance sheet

Assets

Bank balance:

Restricted funds: balance of Ten Percent Foundation grant	561.12	
Unrestricted funds	<u>821.03</u>	1,382.15

Swift boxes:

Stimpson: 2 @ £25.50	51.00	
Impeckable 4-hole: 2 @ £0 (donated seconds)	0.00	
Impeckable 1-hole: 2 @ £86	172.00	
Impeckable 2-hole: 1 @ £148	148.00	
Action for Swifts flat-pack: 3 @ £20	60.00	
Action for Swifts with bat back: 1 @ £50	50.00	
Action for Swifts moulded plastic: 2 @ £0	0.00	
Swift brick: 2 @ £30	60.00	
Peak Boxes base-entry: 1 @ £45	45.00	
Peak Boxes front-entry: 10 @ £38.75	<u>387.48</u>	973.48

Total assets 2,355.63

Liabilities 0.00

Net assets 2,355.63