

# **PE2134/C: Introduce legislation to make it a requirement for swift bricks to be installed in all new developments in Scotland, and include swifts in building surveys**

## **Petitioner written submission, 24 February 2025**

As petitioner for petition PE2134, I would like to make a brief submission in response to [the Scottish Government's own response \(PE2134/B\) on 7th February 2025](#).

I would like to make clear that the Swift Brick is a 'Universal' provision meaning it will serve a variety of cavity nesting bird species including other Red Listed species, such as Sparrow, House Martin and Starling, all in severe decline in part due to nest site loss in the built environment. Being a multi-use provision means the swift bricks do not need to be installed in an area known to have swifts, and in large numbers, would be a huge tick in the box for improved biodiversity enhancement.

I appreciate fully the 'Developing with Nature Guidance' document referred to in the Government response but in real terms the enhancements are rarely being made. [A recent report by Wild Justice, albeit across England, reported that only half of the biodiversity enhancements called for were being implemented.](#)

In addition, I noted the statement in paragraph 6 of the Scottish Government response:

"Where survey work associated with new development highlights the presence of rare and vulnerable species, we would expect provisions, such as swift nesting bricks, to be made in development to protect and where possible enhance the local populations."

The system is not working. Firstly, an ecological survey rarely includes swift and if it does then there is currently no requirement for swift mitigation or provision to be conditioned. This applies to ecological surveys conducted on a particular building (e.g. in relation to a planning application) and those conducted on a specified area for development. The swift breeding season spans May to early September. Swifts are difficult to survey at any time outwith the peak surveying months of June and July, this is because finding swifts depends on time spent around buildings watching their communication behaviour i.e. the Screaming Party, which leads to the location of established nesting colonies. All too often a swift survey, if carried out at all, is not within this time frame giving a nil or poor record of swift activity, and it is expected swifts can be located at the same time as a bat survey which is mostly inconclusive. My explanation addresses the above statement and refers to my second petition 'ask' – to have swifts included in ecological surveys, which wasn't included in the Scottish Government's response of 7th February.

Swift Conservation groups across the UK are struggling to impress on builders, developers, architects, and local authorities the urgent need to provide this inexpensive and simple solution. It is an enormous task, and we politely ask for positive support and follow through to see results or a way forward.

The UK swift brick petition, supported by the RSPB received over 109,000 signatures in 2023, the Welsh petition collected almost 11,000 signatures, this shows the strength of feeling for swifts in the UK. Thank you for considering my submission.