

## Tom Hawkes

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**From:** Virginia Wenban [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 October 2025 10:34  
**To:** Mel Dawkins  
**Cc:** Consultations; Martin Hall; Sian Pettman; Anthony Dance; Andre Farrar  
**Subject:** Re: Focused consultation Draft Local Plan 2025

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### --Email From External Account--

Hi Mel

Thank you for your response.

Yes, sorry, I didn't make myself sufficiently clear - I had referenced the paragraph which Martin has highlighted in my original email but if CCC are willing to mandate swift bricks in all new builds and preferably in extensions too, then we would need a much more robust reference to the inclusion of swift bricks and this needs to come under **building design**, not gardens, as it is currently drafted.

The following wording is a suggestion:

**Swift bricks should be incorporated within developments (including refurbishments, extensions and new build) to provide nesting and roosting opportunities for birds, including species under threat such as swifts, house sparrows, house martins, and starlings, in addition to integral bat boxes.**

**Swift bricks are also used by house sparrows and other small bird species so are considered a 'universal nest brick'. Integrated nesting bricks are preferred to external boxes for reasons of longevity, zero maintenance requirements, better temperature regulation with future climate change in mind, and aesthetic integration with the building design. Swift bricks should be installed in accordance with best-practice guidance, e.g. BS 42021 or CIEEM, which recommends at least one swift brick per dwelling on average in each development, installed as high as possible.**

**Masonry-fronted swift bricks will regulate the internal temperature so can be placed on any elevation, but ideally should be installed under shade-casting eaves or avoiding southerly elevations. They should be installed in groups of at least two or three if practical, with at least 5m clear drop beneath, and preferably with a 5m clearance between the host building and other buildings or obstructions. Where possible, avoid siting swift bricks above windows or doors. Where swift bricks are not practical due to the nature of construction of the development, alternative designs of suitable swift nest boxes should be provided in their place.**

The new David Wilson development at Thannington has voluntarily and correctly installed swift bricks on a number of the houses there so this provides a good local example of what can be done. I have counted 56 so far though there may be more! We very much hope to find the capacity to monitor these for occupation by species in the coming years.

Many thanks to you and to the council for your attention to this issue.

Best wishes

Ginny

On Fri, 24 Oct 2025 at 15:27, Mel Dawkins [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Ginny,

Thanks for your email regarding swift bricks and having them as part of local plan.

The delay in replying was that I already thought they were in the draft local plan reg 18, so needed to find out with officers if this was the case.

Martin Hall has got back and found the reference.

Swift boxes are referenced in draft local plan 2040 under policy D11 Residential design (2.g.) - see below:

*Gardens should contain integrated composting facilities and appropriately placed measures to increase biodiversity should be included such as bird/swift bricks or boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highway routes in fences;*

I am also acutely aware that as well as the boxes a strategy is needed, to ensure that the Swifts are able to find and accommodate these new homes. Therefore it is great that Swift Streets have received the funding to support this.

Please get in touch if have any other questions.

Best wishes

Cllr Mel Dawkins  
Councillor for St Stephens.  
Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change  
<https://www.facebook.com/meldawkinscouncillor/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/melcanterburycitysouth/>  
<https://bsky.app/profile/meldawkins.bsky.social>  
<https://meldawkins.org/>

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**From:** Virginia Wenban [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 October 2025 09:39  
**To:** consultations <[consultations@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@canterbury.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Focused consultation Draft Local Plan 2025

**--Email From External Account--**

Hello,

I would like to make a generic plea for the inclusion of **swift bricks** (sometimes called universal nest bricks) to be mandated in our Local Plan - to be included in all new developments in Canterbury District going forward.

With reference to the focused consultation, the following proposed developments are particularly noteworthy in relation to swifts and house martins since they are all in locations (or very close by) where we have recorded significant swift or house martin activity this last summer: N4, N5, N6, N7, N8, N9, N15, N16, N17, N18, N22.

Furthermore, where brownfield sites are used and buildings demolished it is imperative that they are properly inspected under eaves and roofs for evidence of nesting swifts, house martins and sparrows - swifts and house martins are site loyal, returning after migration, to their same nest sites year after year - if these have been destroyed in their absence they will try relentlessly to gain access, sometimes dying in the process. Mitigation is essential, preferably in the form of swift bricks installed as adjacent as possible to those destroyed nest sites.

A swift brick is an integral nest box which is installed, like any other brick, into the wall of a building at 5m or higher, during (or can be retrofitted after) construction. There exist best practice guidelines for this via the British Standard BS 42021:2022.

This link explains and illustrates the installation of swift bricks in much more detail:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61bb7f725324733cfd0dcf9d/t/6751d2b550b95f1b02b37b2b/1733415608572/Integral+Nest+Brick+Guidance.pdf>

Swift bricks provide nesting opportunities for red listed cavity nesting birds such as swifts, house sparrows, starlings and even house martins (which traditionally build mud nests on buildings but will utilise swift bricks). These birds rely totally on our buildings to be able to nest but we have failed them with hermetically sealed modern buildings which provide zero opportunity. This, coupled with the demolition, or refurbishment, of older buildings where small crevices were once found and used has resulted in plummeting populations of these species - they have nowhere to nest. Swifts are now classified as endangered in the UK and the situation is particularly acute in south-east England. Their disappearance from our summer skies would be a travesty...and yet they are currently on this very trajectory.

Canterbury City Council kindly provided us with a biodiversity grant from the latest round of funding so we know that the council is supportive and concerned about provision for these red listed birds. The council just needs to go one step further now by mandating the use of swift bricks in new developments.

Many other councils around the country have already mandated swift bricks in their Local Plans (I can think of at least twenty two and can supply a list on request).

Brighton and Hove's policy has been in force for quite some time now and they have published a guidance document which provides an exemplar model clause:

<https://ww3.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/Swift%20Guidance.pdf>

The Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (2040) DM 11 Residential Design - mentions the inclusion of swift bricks but only under para g, in relation to Gardens. This indicates a confusion about swift bricks since they are not connected with gardens. Furthermore, the specification of generic 'bird boxes' always results in the installation of basic boxes on trees suited to populations of blue and great tits which are already doing extremely well - it is swifts, house martins, starlings and sparrows

which need help via the very specific provision of swift bricks **in buildings**. All of these red listed species will use swift bricks.

Kind regards  
Ginny Wenban  
Canterbury District Swifts