

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham St,
London SW1P 4DF

17 April 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing in support of Hannah Bourne-Taylor's campaign for swift bricks to become a requirement in development.

The population of swifts has fallen by almost 60% in the last 30 years and the BTO estimates there will be fewer than 40,000 pairs of swifts remaining in the UK by 2025. As towns, cities and rural buildings are standardised and tidied up, homes for wildlife have been "bricked up" and nesting and roosting sites are vanishing for this amazing bird that lives so closely alongside us.

Alongside stronger planning policy to promote the protection and restoration of priority habitats, essential for the sustainable recovery of swift populations, adding a swift brick to all new homes is an elegant and inexpensive way to make sure that these birds that spend so much of their lives on the wing have somewhere to nest and roost when they need it.

While local planning authorities can require swift bricks through planning conditions, only eight have done so. Local authorities face challenges in inserting new requirements into local plans which are only reviewed every five years and local ambition can be quashed by the Planning Inspectorate. Leadership from your Department would help ensure this important measure becomes widespread.

We hope very much that you are able to make this small but significant change. If there are obstacles to progress, we would be grateful if you would let us know, so that we can help you work through them.

Yours sincerely

Craig Bennett, CEO, The Wildlife Trusts

Prof Juliet Vickery, CEO, BTO

Gemma Cantelo, Head of Policy & Advocacy, RSPB England

Roger Mortlock, CEO, CPRE

Dr Rose O'Neil, CEO, Campaign for National Parks

Wildlife and
Countryside



Nida Al-Fulaij, CEO, People's Trust for Endangered Species

Mike Childs, Head of Science, Policy and Research, Friends of the Earth

Dr Mark Jones, veterinarian, Head of Policy, Born Free

Chris Sherwood, CEO, RSPCA

Andy Lester, Head of Conservation, A Rocha UK

Sue Sayer MBE, Director, Seal Research Trust

Sally Hayns, CEO, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

Chris Luffingham, Acting Chief Executive, League Against Cruel Sports

Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife & Countryside Link