



Nansledan residents invited to take part in Big Duchy Bird Box Survey

Residents in Nansledan are once again being encouraged to take part in this year's Big Duchy Bird Box Survey.

The annual survey, which runs from May to August, monitors the use of built-in nest boxes across Duchy of Cornwall developments and forms a key part of the Duchy's wider commitment to supporting biodiversity and reconnecting communities with nature.



The Duchy has worked with the RSPB for more than a decade to integrate nest boxes into new homes and buildings, helping to address the decline of cavity-nesting birds across the UK. The so-called 'swift bricks' resemble normal bricks or blocks but are hollow inside.

The initiative, which celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, is part of the Duchy's broader approach to sustainability, which includes habitat creation, green spaces, and measures to support wildlife across its estate. It aims to install an average of one nest box per new home built.

Results from last year's survey results show that Nansledan is now home to 731 integrated nest boxes, with 355 boxes – almost half – showing signs of use during the 2025 breeding season.

House Sparrows remained the most common species recorded at Nansledan, alongside large numbers of House Martins and Starlings. There were 51 House Martin nests, 41 House Sparrow nests and 23 Starling nests identified during last year's survey.

Significantly, swifts were recorded breeding in Duchy-built boxes for the first time last year, with nests identified at the Duchy's Tregunnel Hill development in Newquay and at Poundbury in Dorset. The hope now is that swifts will increasingly begin to take up residence in Nansledan too as the development matures and more habitats become established.



Dr Thaís Martins, a biodiversity expert who leads the annual survey, said: *"The survey is a fantastic way for residents and families to get involved in a real citizen science project. Every observation helps us build a clearer picture of how these species are responding and how we can continue to support them, so we hope as many people as possible take part this year in Nansledan."*

"Seeing swifts begin to nest in the Duchy's boxes for the first time is incredibly exciting. These birds are famously slow to adopt new nesting sites, so this was always something we expected would take time."

"What this shows is that by putting the right infrastructure in place and being patient, we can create real opportunities for species that are in long-term decline. We're hopeful this is just the beginning and that we will see many more swifts using these boxes in the years ahead."

Dr David Cope, Executive Director for Purpose at the Duchy of Cornwall, added: *"The nest box initiative is an example of how we are embedding nature into the fabric of our communities from the outset. It not only supports wildlife but helps residents connect more closely with the natural environment around them. We're keen to recruit even more spotters for this year's survey and look forward to seeing the results."*

Residents can take part simply by keeping an eye on nest boxes in their area and recording birds entering or leaving boxes, with the date they saw them. The survey asks for the position of the box, preferably via the what3words app. The survey is coordinated through the Big Duchy Bird Box Survey Facebook page which includes updates and a link to the online survey form or use the QR code here.



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