

PE2134/A: 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, 28 January 2025

Why the submission?

I contacted the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee (CPPPC) clerking team recently, seeking advice as i realised a relevant word had been omitted within the text of my petition. When my petition was first submitted and reworded, I had happily agreed to the suggested edits offered by the clerks but not noticed that the word 'suitable' had been omitted - entirely my fault and done in haste. As amendments are not allowed after the petition has been published, I have taken the kind advice of the CPPPC clerks and written this submission to accompany my petition. My petition ask is in two parts as the title shows but I hope this will suffice to clarify the detail within the first ask of my petition.

The published petition title with 'suitable' inserted:

Introduce legislation to make it a requirement for swift bricks to be installed in all suitable new developments in Scotland, and include swifts in building surveys.

The published petition summary with 'suitable' inserted:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to help reverse the decline in swift populations by introducing legislation that would make swift nesting bricks a requirement for all suitable new build developments in Scotland, as well as making it mandatory to include swifts in all ecological building surveys.

My reasons for the word suitable being included and taken into account when considering this petition:

Swift bricks ARE building compliant¹, inexpensive, can be incorporated into all build types, maintenance free, and will also serve other building reliant species. Almost every build and construction type will accept a swift brick of some kind, but a 'suitable' build means that the swift brick must be installed according to some guidelines which are:

1. A swift brick should be installed at a height of at least 4 metres above ground and not positioned above a lower storey or extension as a swift 'drops' from its nest site and requires a clear flyway on entry and exit.
2. A generalised and not unacceptable suggested swift brick placement ratio would be 1:1, i.e. one swift brick per suitable unit (if multiple unit

¹ [BS 42021:2022 Integral nest boxes. Selection and installation for new developments.](#)

development). However, it is preferable to consider a small grouping of swift bricks per unit due to swifts being colonial nesters (they prefer being near other nesting pairs rather than in isolation) so an example could be 2 bricks in every other unit or 3 bricks in every third house. Maybe 2 to 4 bricks on a large house or 10-15 across a small block of flats, a hospital or business unit for example. The guidance of a swift group/expert or ecologist with swift experience is recommended to ensure compliance but it is not a complicated provision and with basic guidance such as this any builders can competently install.

Further guidance:

1. Swift bricks, being an **internal** provision, can be incorporated on any aspect including southerly, unlike some **external swift boxes** which can overheat on a southerly aspect unless shaded by overhang.
2. A minimum gap between houses of 1 - 2 metres is sufficient for swift brick installation on a gable end.
3. Swift Brick entrance holes ideally 60cm - 1 metre apart.
4. Swifts are very clean birds and don't leave the pile of droppings that some other birds do.

Please don't hesitate to make contact if there are other areas that need explanation including my second 'ask' the need for ecological surveys to prevent historical colony loss. Thank you for your consideration.