

A survey of Swift (*Apus apus*) nesting sites in county Carlow 2018/2019.

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Table of Contents

Findings	1
Swift Nest Sites	
Leighlinbridge	2
Mill above Cullen’s Butchers.....	2
The Old Mill (Now Apartments).	4
The Black Castle.	6
Harrow Cross/ Oldtown	7
Ballon	8
Old National School.....	8
Joe Doyle’s Pub	9
Carlow Town	11
Number 10. Brown St.....	11
Number 13. Castle St	12
Riverside Estate.....	13
Askea Lawns	14
Carlow Castle.....	16
Castle Mill House.....	17
St Patricks College (Carlow College).....	18
Youth Centre	19
Swift Active Areas	
Carlow Town	26
Old Perry’s Cash and Carry.....	26
Leinster Crescent.....	26
Saint Vincent de Paul.	27
St. Dymphna’s Hospital	27
7 Springs/ Spring Dale/ Oakley Park	28
St. Patricks Avenue.....	28
Green Road Estate	29
Dublin St.....	29
Hanrahans/Kevin Barry/JKL Avenues.....	29
Bagenalstown	30
Queen of the Universe National School.....	30
St. Bridget’s Crescent	30
Ballon	30

Sandbrook House	30
Swift Nestbox Projects	
Carlow Town	31
An Gairdín Beo	31
Scoil Mhuire Gan Small National School	31
Bagenalstown	32
Queen of the Univers National School.....	32
St Brigid’s National School	32
Ballon	33
Ballon Rathoe Community Playschool	33
Sandbrook House	33
Leighlinbridge	34
St. Lazerians National School	34
Brennan’s Pub	34
Old Leighlin.....	35
References	35

Findings

This 2018 survey of swift nesting sites in county Carlow identified a total of 27 nest entrances (16 Leighlinbridge, 3 Ballon and 8 Carlow Town) across 8 sites. A further 14 sites have been identified as harbouring swift activity indicative of nesting activity. These include areas where swifts were repeatedly seen over the season and areas where bangers/screamers were seen to fly low by at buildings (which is indicative of nesting swifts). It is likely that many of these sites contain nesting swifts and additional prolonged surveying of these sites and those already known to be harbouring nesting swifts should lead to the discovery of new nests.

2019 saw the addition of 25 (possibly 30) new nests to make at least 52 known nest sites in Carlow (18 Leighlinbridge, 5 Ballon, 28 Carlow Town and 1 Harrow Cross). This figure, however, may range from 52-57 due to locations where swifts were seen to pass close by potential nest sites or due to other signs of occupancy but where no swift was observed to enter a cavity (see Mill above Cullen's Butchers, Old National School, Queen of the Universe National School and Sandbrook House). Such instances are recorded below at each respective site.

At locations where nests were found, a coloured dot is used to pinpoint on an image the spot at which the swifts were seen entering/exiting from their nesting cavity. The blue dots indicate nests found in 2018 and green dots are additional nests found in 2019, unless otherwise stated (see Youth Centre). The images of the nest sites at the Youth Centre use blue coloured dots to show the exact location of a nest entrance, while an orange coloured dot indicates the approximate location of a nest entrance. Each image is accompanied by a written description of the position of the nest site as indicated on that image. The orientation refers to the direction the nest site faces, ie the direction the swift will be headed when leaving the nest.



Leighlinbridge Village

16/07/2018 60 swifts over village

- A very active swift population with 60-70 birds seen regularly throughout the summer.
- A total of 19 nest entrances have been located at the following sites.

Site 1. Mill above Cullen's Butchers. Milford St. (9 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 68957 65539** Orientation: East

Latitude = **52.73660** (north)

Longitude = **-6.97899** (west)

Description of nest sites.

1. Before first set of windows on left in hole in wall above the 2nd story.
2. Before first set of windows on left in hole in wall above the 3rd story.
3. Between windows 5 and 6 from left under gutter above metal plate.
4. Between windows 6 and 7 from left under gutter above metal plate.
5. Above the 7th window on right under gutter.
6. Right of (black) 7th window on 1st floor in hole in wall.
7. Hole in wall on right of building between 1st + 2nd stories (still feeding chicks on 21/08/2019).
8. Between 2nd and 3rd story on right in hole in wall.
9. On the north side of this mill under roof tiles above the line of the red wall tie (2019).

There is possibly another nest under the gutter on the adjoining premises to the left. This is thought to be above the 3rd window from the right.





The swift was spotted entering the roof space under the tile either to the left or right of the timber beam (2019).
Orientation: North.

Leighlinbridge Village

Site 2. The Old Mill (Now Apartments). Church St. (8 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 68924 65451**

Latitude = **52.73581** (north)

Longitude = **-6.97950** (west)

Orientation: South East

- 8 nests mostly below gutter at top in holes in stonework.

Description of nest sites.

1. In the hole between 1st and 2nd windows from left, above 4th level, below metal plate.
2. Hole under fascia between 2nd and 3rd windows from left, by a grey dimple rock, above the metal plate, slightly to the left.
3. Above the centre of 7th window from left, under fascia.
4. Above the right of 7th window from left, under fascia.
5. Between 7th and 8th windows from left, under fascia, above the metal plate over a limestone rock with a streak through it.
6. Above 8th window from left, on the left under fascia over a round granite stone on right and a narrow stone on left.
7. Between 8th and 9th windows from left, above the metal plate under fascia.
8. Above 9th window from left, on the right under the fascia left of a long narrow granite stone.



Leighlinbridge Village

Site 2. The Old Mill (Now Apartments). Church St.



Leighlinbridge Village

Site 3. The Black Castle. Main St. (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = S 69042 65488

Orientation: North

Latitude = **52.73613** (north)

Longitude = **-6.97775** (west)

16/07/2018 10 bangers

Images and description by Margaret Brennan

As you look at the castle there is a tall narrow slit window in the centre of the castle very near the top. Now look to the very top of the castle and you will see a large rectangular stone just under the top and underneath this is a line of grass/plants, underneath this are 3 smaller blocks with holes between them...the left hand of these 2 holes is the one...enlarge the picture to see this better.

During 2019, this nest was still actively feeding chicks on 19/08/2019.



Harrow Cross/ Oldtown.

The Harrow Cross L3044 Nurney (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71707 66791**

Orientation: South

Latitude = **52.74749** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93801** (west)

19/07/2018 1 Swift banging at south side above left window on right.

07/07/2019 4 bangers and one active nest feeding chicks.

Description of nest site.

1. Between the left and central windows under the galvanised roof at the point where the galvanised overlaps, above the old slate.



Ballon Village

At least 5 nest entrances with more nests likely in pub and school.

Site 1. Old National School. Ballykealey Lane (2-4 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 83036 65870**

Latitude = **52.73759** (north)

Longitude = **-6.77050** (west)

29/07/2018 6 bangers at NW side.

1 bird landed on right hand side of building under gutter and dropped off again on NW side. Possible nest sites on southeast side are denoted by blue dots. No birds were seen entering. Fresh droppings underneath in 2018 and 2019 suggest occupancy in these two locations, however.

26/07/2019 2 nests active on northwest side

Description of nest site.

1. On the northwest side between the 2nd + 3rd windows from right under overhang.
2. On the northwest side between the 3rd + 4th windows from right under overhang.

North West



South East



One of the possible nest sites
on the southeast side.



Ballon Village

Site 2. Joe Doyle's Pub, Main Street Ballon (N80) (3 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 83098 66026** Orientation: West

Latitude = **52.73898** (north)

Longitude = **-6.76954** (west)

29/07/2018 7 Bangers.

Description of nest sites.

1. From left on west side above the 1st window under the tiles above the gutter.
2. From left on west side above the 3rd window above the box to left under the tiles over the gutter in one of holes.
3. On south side over gutter under tiles about 2nd or 3rd tile from left.



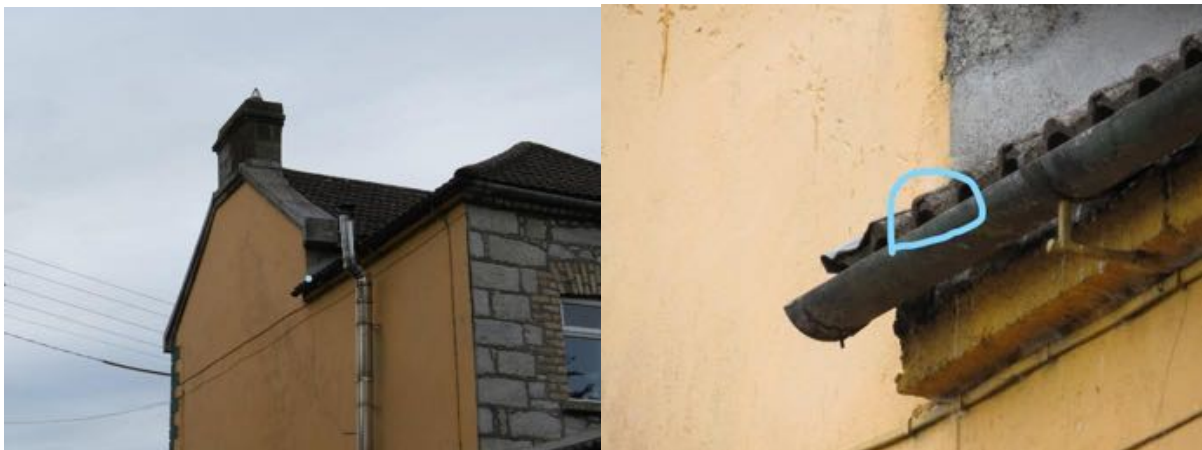
Ballon Village

Site 2. Joe Doyle's Pub Main Street Ballon (N80)

Orientation: North



Orientation: South



Carlow Town

- A very active swift population with the most birds seen over the town at 127 on 04/08/2018.
- A total of 8 swift nest entrances were identified in 2018 with an additional 20 identified in 2019. Many more sites show swift activity.

Site 1. Number 10. Brown St (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72136 76798**

Orientation: North

Latitude = **52.83735** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92945** (west)

08/07/2018 2 swifts seen entering and exiting this entrance

Description of nest site.

1. On the very right of building under the gutter in the long horizontal hole.



Carlow Town

Site 2. Number 13. Castle St (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71883 76703**

Orientation: South

Latitude = **52.83653** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93323** (west)

Description of nest sites.

1. This nest is on No. 13 Castle St. on the back wall of that building facing south. Above window on left under gutter below chimney to right.



Carlow Town

Site 3. Riverside Estate. R448 (4 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72088 76304** Orientation: South

Latitude = **52.83291** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93026** (west)

Nests under tiles over gutter. Very active with around 40 birds including bangers over this row of houses. Likely to be a lot more nests.

04/08/2018 with 42 swifts overhead

Description of nest sites.

1. Above wall on extreme right of building above gutter under tile of house number 2.
2. 1, slightly left of window over wall above gutter under tile on house number 3.
3. 1 above extreme left-hand side of window above gutter under tile on number 3.
4. 1 above right side of window above gutter under tile on number 3.

Riverside estate. Number 2.



Carlow Town

Riverside estate. Number 3



Site 4. Askea Lawns (1986) numbers 22 and 24 (2 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 73381 76163**

Latitude = **52.83147** (north)

Longitude = **-6.91111** (west)

18/07/2018 with 9 bangers

31/07/2018 with 14 bangers

Description of nest sites

1. At very right of building where fascia ends under gutter on number 22.
2. At very right of building where fascia ends under gutter on number 24.

Swifts were seeing landing/ attempting to land at these points. It was unclear whether a hole was present for access.

Carlow Town

Site 4. Askea Lawns (1986), numbers 22 and 24 (2 nests).

Orientation: North West



Carlow Town

Site 5. Carlow Castle, Mill Lane/Governey Square (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71698 76664**

Orientation: West

Latitude = **52.83620** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93597** (west)

Description of nest sites.

1. On northwest tower on west side $\frac{3}{4}$ way up below where vegetation begins to appear in a hole between two blocks (28/07/2019).



Carlow Town

Castle Mill House, Mill Lane (3 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71689 76624** Orientation: North

Latitude = **52.83584** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93611** (west)

25/07/2018 18 bangers, on the south side of the building, the other side to that in view here.

28/07/2019 3 nests identified with at least 5 birds seen entering at three different points.

Description of nest sites

1. Directly above line of wire going down wall behind fascia.
2. To the right of the first nest behind fascia.
3. To the right again behind fascia.



Carlow Town

St Patricks College (Carlow College), College St (1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72337 76800**

Orientation: North West

Latitude = **52.83734** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92646** (west)

05/07/2018 14 Swifts banging at back of college around Student Union Building (possible nesting sites under eaves where holes are available).

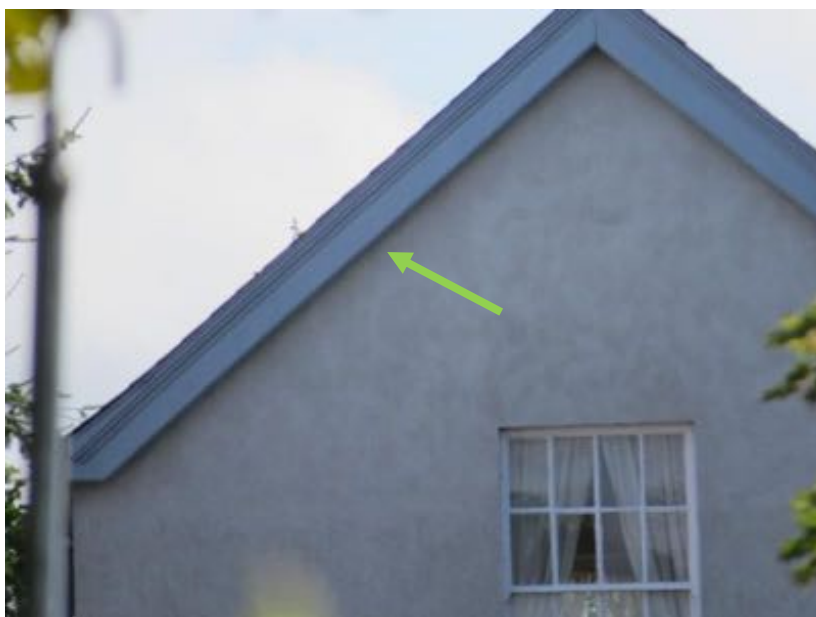
06/07/2018 10 Swifts flying overhead above college

Description of nest site (found 2019).

1. Behind fascia board on left side of gable end halfway up in presumed hole in wall.



This is on the back (east) of the main building on the northwest facing side of the most south easterly wing.



A swift was observed entering underneath the fascia somewhere near here during summer 2019.

Carlow Town

Youth Centre, Glendale Avenue (15 nests).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72701 77224**

Orientation: North West

Latitude = **52.84110** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92097** (west)

31/07/2018 17 active swifts

27/07/2019 26 bangers flying low past the building, three pairs actively feeding chicks, a total of 15 nest entrances identified (all in 2019).

Description of nest sites from left to right.

1. On left wing, right of light behind timber fascia between the gap of two pieces of stone.
2. To right of leftmost window behind timber fascia where three knots are on timber and a piece of limestone rock is surrounded by mortar beneath.
3. On south facing part of front behind fascia above small piece of limestone between mortar to left of cement with reddish brick.
4. To right of downpipe behind fascia above the split between the two blocks.
5. Above 2nd window from left on right behind fascia.
6. Above 3rd window from left on left behind fascia.
7. Above 3rd window from left on right behind fascia above line with edge of windowsill.
8. Behind fascia left of top light in line with light to left of doors.
9. In hole above central window.
10. Behind fascia over/in line with light to right of doors.
11. Between windows 5+6 from left behind fascia above where crack in block is.
12. Above 6th window from left behind fascia where gap at top of wall extends into fascia.
13. Behind fascia to left of rightmost window where stone changes to mortar.
14. Behind fascia at slit in mortar above left side of rightmost window.
15. In hole on left above timber part of rightmost window.





Nest Number 1, Youth Centre (exact).



Nest Number 2, Youth Centre (exact).



Nest Number 3, Youth Centre (exact).



Nest Number 4, Youth Centre (exact).



Nests 3+4, Youth Centre.



Nest Number 5, Youth Centre.



Nests 6,7,8, Youth Centre.



Nest Number 9, Youth Centre (exact).



Nest Number 10, Youth Centre.



Nest Number 11, Youth Centre (exact).



Nest Number 12, Youth Centre (exact).



Nests 13,14,15, Youth Centre (exact).

Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Carlow Town

Old Perry's Cash and Carry. Kennedy St.

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71874 76624**

Latitude = **52.83582** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93338** (west)

25/07/2018 with 12 bangers

Orientation: South East



Leinster Crescent (Numbers 1,2,3 and 4) (all same building). Dublin Road

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72342 77179**

Latitude = **52.84075** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92630** (west)

09/07/2018 2 bangers

12/07/2018 6 bangers

Orientation: South East



Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Carlow Town

Saint Vincent de Paul. Dublin Road

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72453 77281**

Latitude = **52.84164** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92463** (west)

07/07/2018 6 bangers

Orientation: North West



St. Dymphna's Hospital, Carlow

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72309 77428**

Latitude = **52.84298** (north)

Longitude = **-6.92675** (west)

07/07/2018 24 birds overhead with 6 bangers low over outbuildings

12/07/2018 13 bangers



Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Carlow Town

7 Springs/ Spring Dale/ Oakley Park

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 73013 76409**

Latitude = **52.83373** (north)

Longitude = **-6.91652** (west)

18/07/2018. 19 bangers

31/07/2018 34 active swifts

Bangers seen flying at back of houses from number 10-17 Seven Springs, and back of numbers 22-39 Springdale.



St. Patricks Avenue numbers 31,33,34

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72994 76695**

Orientation: West

Latitude = **52.83631** (north)

Longitude = **-6.91674** (west)

22/06/2018 11 bangers

18/07/2018. 4 bangers.

31/07/2018. 8 bangers.



Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Carlow Town

Green Road Estate

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 71962 75483**

Latitude = **52.82556** (north)

Longitude = **-6.93232** (west)

25/07/2018 with 27 screeching swifts over estate

04/08/2018 with 32 screeching swifts over estate

Dublin St

12/07/2018 27 swifts over street at 20:45. 12/07/2018

Hanrahans/Kevin Barry/JKL avenues

31/07/2018. 22 active swifts

Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Bagenalstown.

Bagenalstown

Queen of the Universe National School, Long Range (possibly 1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 70065 61675**

Latitude = **52.70173** (north)

Longitude = **-6.96342** (west)

03/06/2019 7 swifts circling overhead and some screeching and banging off school water tower.

05/07/2019 2 swifts banging at hole on north facing side of school.

St. Bridget's Crescent Housing Estate.

03/07/2019 4 swifts flying low around estate.

Other sites with bangers and active swifts in Ballon

Sandbrook House (possibly 1 nest).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 83694 68198**

Latitude = **52.75840** (north)

Longitude = **-6.76015** (west)

07/07/2019 2 swifts regularly passing close by/banging a vent with House Sparrows nesting in it, swifts not seen to enter.



Swift Nesting Projects County Carlow, by Pádraig Webb

As of September 2019. A total of 74 potential nest sites are provided for by public nest box projects around Co. Carlow. An additional 21 nest sites are provided for by two projects on private dwellings bringing the total to 95. It is expected that additional projects will be complete in the coming year.

Carlow Town

An Gairdín Beo, Dublin Road, Carlow.

2x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes and call system (An Gairdín Beo biodiversity group).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72384 77166**
Latitude = **52.84062** (north)
Longitude = **-6.92568** (west)

Scoil Mhuire Gan Small National School, Green Lane, Co. Carlow.

4x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes and call system.



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 72565 76910**
Latitude = **52.83829** (north)
Longitude = **-6.92305** (west)

Bagenalstown.

Queen of the Universe National School, Long Range, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow.

5x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes (Bagenalstown Tidy Towns).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 70061 61656**
Latitude = **52.70156** (north)
Longitude = **-6.96347** (west)

St Brigid's National School, Station Road, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow.

2x triple and 1x double cavity Genesis nest boxes (Bagenalstown Tidy Towns).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 70648 61525**
Latitude = **52.70031** (north)
Longitude = **-6.95482** (west)

Ballon.

Ballon Rathoe Community Playschool, Ballon Enterprise Centre, Ballon, Co. Carlow.

6x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes (Ballon Improvement Group/Tidy Towns).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 83020 65894**
Latitude = **52.73781** (north)
Longitude = **-6.77072** (west)

Sandbrook House, Ballon, Co. Carlow.

2x Triple cavity Genesis nest boxes (private dwelling).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 83658 68219**
Latitude = **52.75860** (north)
Longitude = **-6.76069** (west)

Leighlinbridge.

St. Lazerians National School, Ballynaboley, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow

3x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes and call system (Leighlinbridge Tidy Towns).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 69417 65408**
Latitude = **52.73536** (north)
Longitude = **-6.97221** (west)

Teac Uí Braonáin, River Barrow, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow.

2x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes (private dwelling).



10 digit Grid Ref = **S 69049 65515**
Latitude = **52.73637** (north)
Longitude = **-6.97764** (west)

Leighlinbridge.

Old Leighlin, Co. Carlow.

5x triple cavity Genesis nest boxes (private dwelling).

10 digit Grid Ref = **S 65432 67280**

Latitude = **52.75268** (north)

Longitude = **-7.03084** (west)



References

All images copyright Pádraig Webb except for those of the Black Castle site which are copyright Margaret Brennan.

Grid references and coordinates obtained using [gridreference.ie](http://www.gridreference.ie).

Grid Reference Ireland, 2018. Available at <<http://www.gridreference.ie>> Accessed 19 September 2018.