

Gwenoliad Duon Llanidloes Swifts Launches

Last Wednesday evening 24th January at the Family friendly, beautifully restored Hanging Gardens venue in Llanidloes, the Gwenoliad Duon Llanidloes Swifts conservation group launched to a packed house. From as far away as Machynlleth people came to find out about the amazing Common Swifts and join in the group's efforts to improve their fortunes when they arrive in Llanidloes each May to breed.

After delicious cakes and drinks the evening started with a photographic presentation helping to identify these wonderful summer visitors from the three other stunning passerine migrant species that make their way to Powys from Africa. Lottie Glover of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust presented and then fielded a Q&A session with the audience at the end.

Llanidloes Explorer Scouts were in attendance and one of their number, Jack Glover, read out a message from Jenny Rathbone, MS, the Senedd Swift species champion. He was followed by Llanidloes Town Council Mayor Jamie Jones who made a heartfelt speech on the importance of looking after our wildlife and expressed the Llanidloes Town Council's full support.

To round off the speakers' presentations, Tamlin Watson from Zero Carbon Llanidloes Di-Garbon ended by explaining what those present could do to support these iconic birds such as wildlife friendly gardening, more relaxed management in local green spaces in the town, stopping pesticide use and getting involved in No Mow May. All members of the audience were encouraged to engage with the group and spread the word to the wider community.

The group's next activity will be to assemble and put swift boxes up in strategic sites around the town; the eco-committee from Ysgol Uwchradd Llanidloes High School and the Explorer Scouts have offered to assist with swift box assembly. A call for a cherry picker operator to donate their equipment and assistance was also made to our local community.

As well as volunteering to have swift boxes on their houses or to offer their time to assist with surveys or engagement, many attendees also gave helpful donations and took home expert free booklets on swifts and their nesting and feeding habits.

For more information on how to get involved with or make a donation to Gwenoliad Duon Llanidloes Swifts, including raising awareness about Swifts in the local area, surveying and recording current nesting sites, and providing new nesting opportunities, please email Llanidloesswifts@gmail.com

This community bird-life conservation initiative is a joint venture between Zero Carbon Llanidloes Di-Garbon, The Wilderness Trust, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and Powys Nature Partnership.