



## Media release

# Winner of the Swift Tower competition announced!

### Winning design to be built in Oxford University Parks

A public vote to find a design for a new Swift Tower has chosen Jonathan Wheeler from Lower Radley, Oxfordshire as the winner of the Swift Tower Competition. His winning design will be built by the University of Oxford in the University Parks, subject to approval and consultation.

The competition was launched on 6 May to find a design for a new Swift Tower to be built in Oxford. A panel of judges selected a shortlist from the entries received, and the public were asked to cast their votes for the design they would most like to see built in the Oxford University Parks.

A Swift Tower is a free-standing structure, with lots of boxes for swifts to build their nests in. As traditional nesting sites in buildings are being lost, it is important to replace them and help stop the decline of swifts. This competition is part of Oxford Swift City, a two-year project to improve the outlook for swifts in Oxford, made possible by National Lottery players through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In addition to the winner, designs submitted by Thurston Tallack and Judith Godsland, both from Oxford, were also included in the judges' shortlist.

All entries to the competition will be on display at a public exhibition at The Gallery in the Oxford Town Hall from 13 November 2017 to 2 January 2018.

**Jonathan Wheeler, winner of the Swift Tower competition, said:** "I'm delighted to have won the Oxford swift tower design competition. I tried to convey the sweeping, curving shape of swifts in my design and hope it will be a pleasing sculptural form in the park as well as a safe haven for swifts in the city. I will be excited to see my sketchbook ideas come to life in steel and I hope birds and wildlife enjoy living there as much as I enjoyed designing it. I'm very grateful to everyone who voted for my design."

**Lucy Hyde, Oxford Swift City Project Officer, said:** "The judges would like to commend all the competition entrants for their creativity and innovation, which made selecting a shortlist a very challenging task. Jonathan Wheeler's design is not only going to help Oxford's swifts by providing lots of new nesting sites, but will also be an incredible piece of public art. We love that the design was chosen by the public, who have really embraced the Oxford Swift City project and everything we're trying to do to help these incredible birds to thrive in our city."

**Harriet Waters, Head of Environmental Sustainability, University of Oxford, said:** "It will be wonderful to see a swift tower in the University Parks. With swifts nesting in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History tower and swift boxes being installed on University buildings, we are very keen to be involved with this great project to make Oxford a swift city."

All of the organisations involved in this project would like to thank National Lottery players for their very generous support. Without it, this project would not be able to happen.

**ENDS**

**For further information and to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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**Images**

The winning design is attached to this email. To see the other shortlisted and category-winning designs, please contact Keo Baxendine as above.

**1. The RSPB** is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home. Together with our partners, we protect threatened birds and wildlife so our towns, coast and countryside will teem with life once again. We play a leading role in BirdLife International, a worldwide partnership of nature conservation organisations. [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

**2. About the Heritage Lottery Fund:** Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported.

**2. The Oxford Swift City project** launched on 6 May 2017 and runs for two years, made possible by National Lottery players and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Project partners hope to improve the outlook for swifts in Oxford by raising local awareness of the many ways we can help these vulnerable birds. The Oxford Swift City project team is made up of several local partners including the RSPB, the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, Environmental Resource Management, Dr. A. Lack, Dr. J. Hughes, Mr. C. Mason, Oxford City Council, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, and the University of Oxford.

**3. Oxford has a long scientific and cultural association with swifts.** The swift colony nesting at the Oxford University Natural History Museum has been intensively studied by the Edward Grey Institute of Ornithology since 1948; one of the longest continuous studies of a single bird species in the world.

**Working together to give nature a home**



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