

lyngline

community news in the lyng

SPRING 2020

Lyng
Community
Association is
on Facebook -
so look us up
and "like" us!



Game on for Sport Relief

Lyng children stepped up to the Sport Relief challenge this spring.

Members of our 5-11 Club tried out different sports and learned about teamwork as part of the national fundraising drive in March.

Having already raised funds for the charity during various school activities, youngsters focused on the positive messages that sport can help to promote.

LCA Community Events Coordinator Amy Rushton said: "As well as sampling different sports activities, we talked about being kind, helping each other and how the simplest things can make a difference in other people's lives."



Enjoying a sporting challenge

Coronavirus latest

During the current Coronavirus crisis, we are working hard to continue meeting our residents' needs while keeping everyone as safe as possible.

In line with government guidance, we can only deal with urgent or emergency repairs and we have closed our office to visitors.

You can still call your Housing Officer or report repairs on **0121 525 5969**. Out-of-hours repairs should be reported on **0300 333 6540**.

All our community activities have been suspended until further notice, including the Toddlers Group, Youth Club, 5-11 Club and day trips.

We will keep you updated via our website, Facebook and Twitter pages – so please keep an eye on them.

Staff shortages, due to self-isolation, may impact our team and contractors. So we ask for your patience and understanding while we all pull together to get through these difficult times.

For the latest advice on keeping safe go to <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> or www.nhs.uk

Check
it out!



You can now catch up with Lyng Community Association and our latest activities on Instagram.

We have set up an account so we can share photos and videos of our events via the smartphone app.

Check us out by searching for **'lyngcommunityassociation'**

Adult courses

We are keen to run more courses for adults but need your help to make sure we organise activities which are of interest to our residents.

So please get in touch with your ideas for future classes. Pop in at the LCA office or call us on **0121 525 5969**.

Charity choice

The Black Country Acorns Children's Hospice has been chosen as Lyng's Charity of the Year for 2020.

LCA will organise a range of events over the coming year to bring in funds for Acorns, in support of the charity's £2 million fundraising campaign to secure the future of its Walsall hospice.

Please look out for details of future events and lend your support.

Celebrating Lyng moms

Young people got crafty on the Lyng to create thoughtful gifts for Mother's Day.

Members of the 5-11 Club and Lyng Youth Club took part in workshops run by The Travelling Craft Room in March.

They each designed and made their own picture frames as a unique, personalised gift for their mom.

LCA Community Events Coordinator Amy Rushton said: "The workshops were a huge success, with lots of our young people taking part in the craft activities."



Selecting lettering



Creating frames

Movie magic

Families had a magical time at our latest Community Cinema showing, back in February.

An audience of around 40 people attended our screening of the musical fantasy Aladdin, at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

The event also raised £23 for Children in Need, through donations for our tuck shop refreshments.



Getting artistic

Feast of fun

Lyng youngsters enjoyed a host of fun activities to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Members of Lyng Youth Club, the 5-11 Club and our Toddlers Group took part in the January festivities to mark the start of 'Year of the Rat'.

Celebrations included craft workshops making lanterns and pictures of Chinese zodiac animals, plus themed games such as 'Chase the dragon's tail'.

There were also food tasting sessions where children got the chance to sample prawn crackers, chow mein, spring rolls, prawn toast, sweet and sour chicken, chicken curry, egg fried rice and fortune cookies.

LCA Community Events Coordinator Amy Rushton said: "Everyone really enjoyed the Chinese New Year activities. It was a great opportunity to learn about a different culture while having a lot of fun."



Opening fortune cookies

Party time

Around 100 Lyng residents joined us for our Children's Christmas Party in December.

Youngsters and their parents got into the festive spirit at the Saturday afternoon event, playing party games, disco dancing, visiting Santa in his grotto and receiving gifts.



Panto treat

Members of our youth club and 5-11 Club were in for a treat when we organised a trip to the theatre just before Christmas.

A group of 50 children attended the Sunday performance of the pantomime 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' at Birmingham Hippodrome.



Rent rise

Over the last four years we have reduced our rents by 1% each year, in line with government policy affecting all social housing providers.

So, instead of rents rising with inflation, they went down. For example, rent for a three-bedroom house on Dingley Bells fell from £103.35 in 2015/16 to £99.29 in 2019/20.

If the government had set a policy allowing inflation-only increases – around 8% over the past four years – this rent would have risen to £111.62 by 2020. So, in real terms, rents have reduced by around 11%.

From 1st April 2020, the government's Regulator for Social Housing is letting housing associations increase rents in line with its 2020 rent standard. This allows for a Consumer Price Index (cost of living) increase, currently 1.7%, plus 1%.

This means LCA will be increasing rents by 2.7% from 6th April. We wrote to you in February to confirm what your rent will be, along with any increase to your service charge.

We are committed to providing high quality homes that are affordable and meet the needs of the people who live in them, so any additional income will be invested in improving our properties and services or building new homes.



To make sure you get the right benefits, you need to report any changes in your circumstances – such as a rent rise – to the Department for Work and Pensions via your Universal Credit online account.

- ***If you're concerned about the rent increase and would like advice on claiming benefits or managing your money, please call us on 0121 525 5969 or contact Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau on 0300 330 9017.***

Beware of cuckooing

'Cuckooing' is when criminals target vulnerable adults, particularly those with care and support needs, to use their home for drug dealing.

Dealers often offer money or free drugs so they can use the property to manufacture and deal drugs in a place which is under the police radar, usually staying for just one day.

The person living there is often too terrified to go to the police for fear of being suspected of involvement with criminal activity, potentially resulting in eviction.

Signs to look out for, which may indicate a home near you is being used for drug dealing include:

- ***a multi-occupancy property***
- ***more coming and goings***
- ***new vehicles parked outside or frequent use of hire cars or taxis***
- ***anti-social behaviour in and around the property***



- ***occupants no longer engaging with support services***
- ***new, unidentified people in the house***
- ***the property becoming empty of any valuable possessions and falling into disrepair.***

If you are concerned about cuckooing or other drug-related crime in your area, call the police on **101** or Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 1111**. If you have any concerns, contact your Housing Officer on **0121 525 5969**.

Get ready for Universal Credit



A new benefit for people on low incomes or out of work, Universal Credit, is being rolled out nationally and is now available to Sandwell residents.

Universal Credit:

- ***must be claimed online***
- ***is a single monthly payment directly into your bank account***
- ***includes Housing Benefit, so you need to arrange to pay rent to your landlord.***

Initially, only single people who have no dependent children and are making a new claim will apply for Universal Credit. If you're already claiming benefits, you don't need to do anything – you'll be told when the changeover will affect you.

Universal Credit replaces Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. However, if you have three or more dependent children or live in exempt or temporary accommodation (as defined by Sandwell Council), you should still claim Housing Benefit.

Any other benefits should be applied for separately – including Local Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments, which should be claimed from Sandwell Council.

For more information, visit **www.gov.uk** or call the Universal Credit helpline on **0345 600 0723**.

What's on

Subject to the latest national guidance in relation to the Coronavirus outbreak, we currently have these activities planned:

- **Monday 3rd to Friday 7th August – Summer play scheme.** A week of crafts, games and a free trip, all themed around space. Open to children aged five to 11.
- **Wednesday 12th August – Summer Community Trip to Blackpool.**

Please contact LCA - or check out our Facebook page - for more details about forthcoming events.

Springing into life

Lyng's community allotment is beginning to spring into life, with plans afoot to plant new fruit trees there.

Residents are welcome to grow their own produce on the plot, at Bromford Lane Allotments.

If you might be interested in getting involved, drop in at the LCA Office at 3 Frank Fisher Way or call us on **0121 525 5969** to find out more.



Active toddlers

Our Toddlers Group provides a range of activities to help young children have the best start in life.

The group, open to under-fives, meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays (in term-time) from 9.15am to 11am at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

There are crafts, games and toys to play with, plus certificates and prizes for continued attendance. Sessions help children develop their movement skills, make new friends and encourage independence. Youngsters can have toast, snacks and drinks, while parents are offered toast, drinks and support in a non-judgemental environment. Sessions are free for the first visit, then £2 per family afterwards.



Making friends

Lyng's 5-11 Club is a great way to have some fun and make new friends.

Open to children aged between five and 11, the club meets at the church on Mondays (in term-time) from 4.30pm to 6pm.



The themed sessions (usually based around calendar events such as St George's Day or Halloween) include games, crafts and occasional trips.

Sessions are free but children can bring up to 50p to spend on tuck if they like. All youth workers and volunteers are safeguarding trained and DBS checked.

Youngsters are welcome to come along to any of our sessions and find out more.

Sprucing up Lyng homes

We replace key components in our homes, such as kitchens and bathroom suites, when they have reached the end of their useful lives.

The government's Decent Homes Standard requires that kitchens should be replaced after 20 years and bathrooms after 30 years. As our oldest properties date from 2004, kitchen replacements are scheduled to start in 2024 and bathroom replacements in 2034.

Here is our planned programme of work:

- The Sidings (1-35), Old Flour Mills (even numbers), Charity Bick Way

(even numbers 2-30), Turks Head Way (8-22) **Kitchens 2024 – Bathrooms 2034**

- Charity Bick Way (odd numbers 1-41), Turks Head Way (24-28), Lyng Lane (201-221), Southwell Walk (even numbers 2-10) **Kitchens 2026 – Bathrooms 2036**
- Frank Fisher Way (1-44), Lyng Lane (87-93), St Johns Mews, Dingley Bells, Downing Crescent, Lyttleton Street, Old Flour Mills (odd numbers), The Sidings (37-39), Charity Bick Way (36) **Kitchens 2031 – Bathrooms 2041**
- Newhall Street, Pleasant Street, Sams Lane, Lyng Lane (even numbers 200-208 and 223-227), Southwell Walk (odd numbers), Charity Bick Way (43 and 45) **Kitchens 2032 – Bathrooms 2042**
- Leopard Lane **Kitchens 2036 – Bathrooms 2046**