



WINTER 2019

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



Festive family fun



Creating festive decorations

Lyng families had a fun-filled festive time at our popular Christmas Craft Morning.

The event, held at the church, was a huge success, with over 50 children joining us with their parents.

Activities included making magic reindeer food, marshmallow snowmen, iced biscuits, crackers, calendars, Christmas badges, cards and decorations – while enjoying delicious hot chocolate and other seasonal refreshments.

The children also took the opportunity to write their letters to Santa, who popped in for a surprise visit!



Meeting Santa



Making Christmas cards

A helping hand

Generous Lyng residents of all ages have helped us collect a range of food to help local people in crisis this Christmas.

Tenants, youth group members and volunteers have gathered hundreds of items to donate to West Bromwich Food Bank.

The charity provides emergency food parcels to families and individuals struggling to afford to feed themselves.



Christmas opening

We hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Over the holiday season, the LCA office will be open on these days:

Monday 23rd December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Tuesday 24th December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Wednesday 25th December – closed

Thursday 26th December – closed

Friday 27th December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Monday 30th December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Tuesday 31st December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Wednesday 1st January – closed

Thursday 2nd January – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Friday 3rd January – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

The out-of-hours number is **0300 333 6540**. This is for **EMERGENCIES ONLY**, so engineers will only attend to make safe and/or contain. All reported repairs will be recorded, then attended to in January 2020.



Fresh start for New Year

Fancy a fresh start in 2020? Then make a New Year's resolution to join us on Lyng's community allotment!

It's a great opportunity to make new friends, enjoy home-grown fruit and veg, learn about gardening and have fun outdoors.

Drop in at the LCA Office, 3 Frank Fisher Way, or call us on **0121 525 5969** to find out more.

Halloween festivities

Pumpkin picking, lantern carving and animal antics were all part of the line-up during our half-term Halloween trip.

Lyng youth group members visited Apley Farm, in Shropshire, to harvest pumpkins and create seasonal decorations.

They then got the chance to visit the farm, with many of our youngsters conquering their fears to feed animals for the first time.

Due to the success of the event, we are now exploring volunteering opportunities at local animal shelters for our young people.

LCA Community Events Coordinator Amy Rushton said: "We had to change the trip destination at the last minute, after the planned venue phoned the night before to say they had no pumpkins left! But the trip was a massive success and the farm staff were fantastic."



Universal Credit – top tips

Here are some tips to help make your Universal Credit claim go as smoothly as possible.



- *Make sure you have accurate documents that prove you need to pay rent and that you live in the property. Missing or inaccurate information could delay your first payment.*
- *Ensure you have a bank, building society or credit union account ready for your payment, then arrange to set up a direct debit or standing order to pay your rent.*
- *If you can't manage until your first Universal Credit payment, you can apply for an advance. The most you can get will be the same as your first estimated monthly instalment. But you will need to pay back this advance out of your future Universal Credit payments (usually over 12 months, although this will be extended to 16 months in 2021).*

Rent rise reminder

We want to remind all our tenants that LCA will be increasing its rents from April next year.

This follows an annual 1% rent cut over the last four years, which was set by the government.

But, from next April, the government is allowing housing associations to increase their rents in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%.

So, along with other housing association residents across the country, our tenants will see an increase in their rent from 2020.

However, our rents are still around 40% less than those for equivalent housing in the private rented sector.

Farewell to Corilee

Longstanding Lyng campaigner Corilee Williams has retired after 20 years as an LCA Board member.



Corilee – who lived on the old, council-managed estate – was a founder member of the residents' group which lobbied for redevelopment and later set up Lyng Community Association to manage the new homes.

She said: "The old estate was a mess, with dilapidated buildings, a bad layout and the atmosphere was very poor. I wanted to get involved to see what I could do to make things better."

Corilee has devoted countless hours to LCA and is proud to have played her part in achieving the huge improvement in the area over the years. She still lives in West Bromwich and maintains her links with the estate, where her daughter now lives.

LCA Chair Wendy Bodenham said: "We are all sorry to see Corilee go, having made such an excellent contribution to the Lyng."

- *We are now seeking local residents to join the Board. This involves attending seven meetings a year, usually on Tuesdays from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at a local venue. Interested? Then please call us for more details on **0121 525 5969**.*

... and welcome!

We are pleased to have welcomed two new members to the LCA Board – Amandeep Bassi and David Hollis.

Amandeep, originally from Wolverhampton, is a qualified accountant with a keen interest in helping young people achieve their potential.

David, an LCA resident from Charity Bick Way, is very interested in community activities and making the area a better place to live.

Repairs explained

As your landlord, LCA is responsible for repairs in your home which are needed due to long-term wear and tear.

But we will re-charge you for the cost of repairs due to deliberate or accidental damage caused by you, another member of your household or visitors.

Repairs which are your responsibility – and for which you will be re-charged – include:

- *unblocking sinks, toilets or drains due to misuse*
- *replacing keys, fobs and locks where the lock is not faulty (eg. when keys are lost)*
- *getting into a property where you have locked yourself out*
- *replacing lightbulbs or fluorescent tubes*
- *work needed due to you not carrying out routine repairs that are your responsibility or not reporting repairs which are our responsibility*
- *damage caused by faulty appliances or installation*
- *a call-out to a heating fault caused by your mistake (such as failing to turn on the heating or setting the timer).*



Enjoying a forest walk

Outdoor adventurers

Young people from the Lyng had lots of adventures during our summer residential trip to Worcestershire.

A group of 21 members from our Youth Club went on the August three-day visit to the Frank Chapman Outdoor Education Centre in Bewdley.

They took part in an exciting range of activities including high ropes, bushcraft, geocaching, team-building games and even some blindfolded forest walks!

LCA Community Events Coordinator Amy Rushton said: “Everyone had a great time, having fun and learning new skills out in the fresh air – and we had nice sunny weather too. They enjoyed it so much they want to go back and do it all over again.”

Youth Club members had another exciting outing in November, when they visited Drayton Manor for the theme park’s amazing Fireworks Spectacular display.

Youth group fun

Our Lyng Media Club has recently merged with the 5-11 Club, creating a group which runs a host of varied activities for children aged five to 11.

The group meets on Monday evenings, in school term-time, from 4.30pm to 6pm at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John. Sessions are free to attend, but children can bring up to 50p to spend on tuck.

Activities are usually themed around annual events such as Valentine’s Day, St Andrew’s Day, Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas.

Big day for toddlers

Seven Lyng youngsters graduated from our Toddler Group in July.

They were presented with a certificate and gift during a ceremony to celebrate the occasion.

The group, for children under the age of five, runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays (during school term-time), from 9.15am to 11am.

Each session costs £2 per family. Children get to enjoy toast and drinks, while adults have the option of hot drinks.



Cooking up cash

Over 100 people joined us to raise funds for charity at the World’s Biggest Coffee Morning.

Visitors brought in cakes and made donations, raising £350 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Members of our Toddlers Group did their bit by decorating their own cupcakes at the event, held at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John in September.



Top tales fire imagination

Children from the Lyng took inspiration from famous books at our summer play scheme this year.

Activities were themed around the stories of much-loved children’s author Roald Dahl during the week-long event, held during the school holidays.

A total of 35 children took part, making dream catchers, designing T-shirts, enjoying chocolate

workshops and creating dream scenes.

They also had a visit from the ‘Mad Science’ team who ran a potion-mixing workshop based on books including ‘George’s Marvellous Medicine’.

As a special treat, the youngsters visited the West End to see a production of the show ‘Matilda the Musical’, based on one of Dahl’s most popular stories.



Fire safety

For the best chance of you and your family surviving a fire at your home, you should have a clear plan for your escape route.

- Familiarise yourself with the building's specific fire escape routes and be aware of alternative routes.
- Plan your escape route, ensuring all members of the household are aware of it.
- Make sure exit routes are kept clear. Any blockages of communal escape routes should be cleared or immediately notified to LCA so we can clear them.
- Locked external doors and windows should have the key left inside the lock or nearby, so they can be opened easily in an emergency.
- The entrance to a home is usually the best exit in the event of fire BUT a second exit route should be planned in case the first one is blocked.
- If you live in a flat, make sure you close the front door when you leave to prevent fire spreading.
- Rehearse your escape plan with your household, including alternative routes.
- Close internal doors at night if possible, to help stop a fire spreading.

Summer clean-up

Young people turned out in force to clean up the Lyng streets at a litter pick in August.

They collected 26 bags of rubbish before boarding Sandwell Council's 'Eco Bus' to make dream catchers out of recycled materials.

Trips prove popular

Families enjoyed a day at the seaside on our summer trip to Brea, in Somerset.

Three coachloads of LCA tenants and their friends – over 160 people – came along for the August visit.

More recently, we ran a shopping trip for adults to Manchester's Trafford Centre in November and a festive outing to Bath's Christmas Market in December.

Check us out online

Find out about forthcoming events and activities on the Lyng by going online to see what we've got planned.

- **Website** – <http://www.lyng.org.uk/> – for general information, plus dates and details of what's on.
- **Facebook page** – <https://www.facebook.com/lyngcommunityassociation/> – to see photos of what we've been up to, and posts about future events
- **Twitter page** – @LyngLCA – for the latest news and updates.

Useful numbers

Here's some handy numbers to keep by you, in case of emergencies.

- **Lyng Community Association (including repairs)** – 0121 525 5969
- **Repairs out-of-hours** – 0300 333 6540
- **Lyng Medical Centre** – 0121 612 2000
- **Allpay** – 0844 225 5729
- **Sandwell benefits** – 0121 368 0800
- **Sandwell Council Tax** – 0121 368 1001
- **Sandwell Council** – 0121 358 2200
- **National gas emergency service** – 0800 111 999
- **National electricity emergency service** – 0800 404 090
- **Police/Fire/Ambulance emergency** – 999
- **Police non-emergency** – 101
- **Fire brigade non-emergency** – 0800 389 5525
- **NHS non-emergency** – 111
- **Sandwell General Hospital** – 0121 553 1831
- **City Hospital** – 0121 554 3801
- **Crimestoppers** – 0800 555 111
- **South Staffs Water** – 0800 389 1011



Creative craftwork

Lyng residents got creative to make some scented pampering treats at one of our recent adult courses.

A group of 10 people made their own candles, bath bombs and soaps during the sessions, which were run by 'The Travelling Craft Room'.

- To find out more about our programme of adult courses, please call us on **0121 525 5969** or pop in to the LCA office at 3 Frank Fisher Way.

Charity cinema

Our Community Cinema event – a showing of the heart-warming classic, Dumbo – in October raised over £30 towards our Children in Need fundraising efforts.

Around 40 people came along for the screening at the church and made donations for snacks at our tuck shop, which was run by young Lyng volunteers.