



Toddlers enjoy animal magic

Families from the Lyng enjoyed some animal magic when they joined us for a day trip to West Midlands Safari Park.

Members of our Toddlers Group visited the popular tourist attraction in Bewdley to take part in the national Big Toddle in July.

They raised over £400 for children’s charity Barnardo’s during the sponsored walk for under-fives.

A full coachload of 55 people from the estate – toddlers, their parents, brothers and sisters – came along for the day.

Amy Rushton, Community Development Officer at Lyng Community Association (LCA), said: “It was a good day. The children loved it and their parents were grateful to have a day out with them, after all the lockdown restrictions over the last year.”

The Toddlers Group, which now has over 50 young members, has continued to meet throughout this past year subject to social distancing and other safety restrictions.

Activities in recent months include the joys of messy play and a fun-packed ‘beach day’, complete with sandpits for building sandcastles.



Checking out the woolly mammoths



Meeting the lemurs



Creating sandcastles at our ‘beach day’

Toy bonanza

Youngsters in our Toddlers Group and 5-11 Club are having extra fun play sessions thanks to the generosity of Lyng residents.

We appealed for donations of toys as lockdown halted our charity shop visits to widen the range of items for the children to play with.

Since then, we have been overwhelmed by the response, with a vast range of toys handed in. LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: “We want to say a huge thank you to all the people who have donated, particularly as so many are struggling financially at the moment.

“We’ve had a wide variety of items brought in, including pull-along toys, puzzles, baby toys, books, action figures, cars and even a full-size pool table. It really is very much appreciated by us and, of course, the children.”

Office opening

The LCA office, at 3 Frank Fisher Way, has re-opened to visitors following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

It is open weekdays 10am-1pm for drop-ins, and 10am-4pm for phone calls (**0121 525 5969**).

We are asking residents to continue maintaining social distancing when they visit and appreciate many people may still want to wear a face mask.

Our staff can also speak to you from behind the protective screens in the reception area if you prefer.



PULLING TOGETHER

We recently adopted a new national housing association initiative, the 'Together with Tenants' Charter.

This centres around developing a strong relationship with our residents and listening to what you have to say.

In line with this commitment, we have taken the following steps.

- *To promote community safety, we are in regular contact with the Police Community Support Officer team covering our estate and ensure a representative attends resident public meetings.*
- *Our Annual Report to Tenants, issued every September, includes information showing how LCA is performing compared to other associations.*
- *Our robust complaints process is compliant with standards set by the Housing Ombudsman.*
- *We have clear service standards which we share on our website.*
- *We listen to your views and will shortly carry out another survey asking all our tenants about every aspect of our services.*
- *Our team strives to maintain high standards in keeping homes in good repair and contributing to making our neighbourhood a good place to live.*
- *We will respond to any future initiatives by the Government to help people take the first step towards home ownership.*

We are always keen to hear your views, so please get in touch.

Email tnash.lca@btconnect.com or call **0121 525 5969**.

Keeping you safe

Electricians are now on the Lyng carrying out our regular safety checks on your homes. These inspections, which take around two hours, must be carried out on all our homes every 10 years.

So, if you moved into your home in 2011, we will write to you soon confirming which contractor will contact you to arrange an appointment.

Why this is important

About 70 deaths and 350,000 injuries in UK homes are caused by faulty electrics or electrical equipment every year, and over half of accidental house fires are caused by electricity.

As your landlord, we are required by law to ensure your home's electrical installation, wiring and any appliances we supply are maintained in a safe condition when you move in and throughout your tenancy.

How you can help

- *Make sure you know where your fuse box is, so you can turn off the mains switch in an emergency.*
- *Never over-load sockets or plug adaptors into other adaptors.*
- *Maintain any electrical items you bring into your home.*
- *Look out for damage to plugs, sockets, leads and cables, and replace if necessary.*
- *Check light fittings are in good condition and contact LCA if they need repairing or replacing.*
- *Use a residual current device (sold in DIY stores) on outdoor electrical equipment, which instantly turns off the power if there is a fault.*
- *Never store combustible materials near the fuse box or electricity meter.*
- *Don't store items on top of microwaves.*
- *Don't run cables under carpets or rugs.*
- *Never take mains-powered electrical items into your bathroom.*
- *Always switch off electrical items when you are not using them.*

Managing our money

Your rent pays for LCA to maintain your home and provide vital services. As such, it is important we ensure all our tenants keep up to date with their rent payments.

When a resident is struggling financially, we always try to work with them to clear any arrears. Sometimes more formal action is required but eviction is always a last resort.

Our arrears are currently the lowest they have been in 10 years but we recognise that, compared to other similar-sized landlords, we can improve on this.

Rent arrears are a priority debt so please let us know if you have difficulty repaying them.

If you receive Universal Credit but are struggling to keep on top of your finances, contact the Universal Credit free helpline to see if they can change how they pay you, pay you in advance or pay rent directly to your landlord. Call **0800 328 5644** or text **0800 328 1344**.

You can get free debt advice from national charity Step Change. Check out www.stepchange.org or call **0800 138 1111**.

Birthday celebration bash

Lyng youngsters put on their dancing shoes for a special celebration this summer.

Our 5-11 Club, which runs fun activities for 5-11-year-olds, hosted a party to mark the group's ninth birthday.

Club members gathered for dancing, pizza and birthday cake at the event, which was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John in July.



Getting into the groove



Friends enjoy the party

Community allotment thrives

Lyng's community allotment is thriving this summer, as green-fingered local people have embraced 'growing their own'.

A total of 10 residents have taken up the challenge and are now working the plot in Bromford Lane.

They are growing a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit so they can enjoy the benefits of fresh produce and healthy meals.



FOOTBALL CRAZY

Members of our Youth Club got into the sporting spirit during the Euro 2020 games.

We offered them the opportunity to watch one of the crucial matches on the big screen, at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

They were also treated to pizzas all round during the evening, while watching England triumph against Germany at Wembley in June.

Cosmic fun

Outer space was the theme of activities at our summer play scheme this year.

The programme of events, running for a week from August 2nd, got booked up fast following the success of previous years' schemes.

A total of 32 youngsters, aged 5-11, from the Lyng took part this year.

Activities included making fizzy planets, meeting 'out of this world' animals and space-related crafts, games and snacks.

The week culminated in a residential trip to the Frank Chapman Outdoor Education Centre in Bewdley.

Summer fire prevention tips

Here are some top fire prevention tips to help keep you and your family safe this summer.

When having a barbecue:

- place it on a flat surface, away from overhanging trees or shrubs
- never leave a barbecue unattended, and keep pets and children away from it
- keep a bucket of sand or water nearby, in case of emergency
- let ash and leftover charcoal cool down before throwing it away
- never pour flammable liquids onto a lit barbecue.

In the home:

- keep mirrors away from windows, to prevent sunlight being reflected onto something else in the room which might catch fire
- never prop open fire doors – they are there to prevent the spread of smoke and flames in the event of a fire.

Did you know?

LCA gets lots of queries every week but there are some issues we have no control over, so we have to advise people to contact other agencies for help.

Here are the top five subjects we are regularly asked about, but which LCA is not responsible for.

- 1) **Litter** on the park in Lyng Lane and on adopted pavements or roads. Litter collection is controlled by Sandwell Council which schedules sweeping visits, on average, every six weeks. If litter is dangerous (such as broken glass or syringes), contact the council on **0121 368 1177**.
- 2) **Street lighting**. Sandwell Council owns the roads, so only they can repair broken lamps. You can report this online at www.sandwell.gov.uk but, if the damage is dangerous, call **0121 368 1177**.
- 3) **Speeding traffic and parking issues**. Again, the council owns the highways so only they can address these matters. Call highways services on **0121 368 1177**.
- 4) **Anti-social behaviour or criminal acts** carried out by non-Lyng residents in public areas of the estate. LCA only has powers to deal with tenants so, if there are problems with noisy or drunken behaviour by others, the police need to be called.
- 5) **Children's play area**. This was owned by Barratt West Midlands but has since been transferred to Sandwell Council, which is responsible for maintaining it.

A helping hand

This past year has been tough for many of us, with lots of people losing their jobs or seeing their hours cut. But, if you are struggling financially, help is there for you.

West Bromwich Food Bank, based at West Bromwich Community Church in Victoria Street, supports people in crisis by providing three days' worth of food, plus toiletries and pet food if needed.

The service is open Monday-Friday, midday-1.30pm.

For more information, call the food bank on **0121 580 0068** or email fb@elimwestbrom.com

Day trips

We are hoping to take a coachload of Lyng residents on a seaside trip to Llandudno in September. This, along with plans for a winter trip, will of course be subject to lockdown restrictions remaining lifted.

We also hope to host our usual fundraiser in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support as part of the World's Biggest Coffee Morning in September. Look out for more details on all events nearer the time.




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