



SPRING 2022

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



Toddlers thrive on the Lyng

Lyng families are making the most of our Toddlers Group, with numbers doubling over the last two months.

The group now has around 30 children on its books, catering for at least 15 youngsters at each of its twice-weekly sessions.

Recent activities included a Teddy Bears' Picnic and Dress Up Days, which the children loved.

Future sessions will involve Easter-themed fun and games, plus 'messy play' when the children explore different textures and tastes.

Lyng Community Association (LCA) Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: *"We're so pleased with how the group has grown recently, as our regulars have invited friends and family to join us."*

"We are always concerned about building our group back up once our toddlers have left for full-time school, so to be in this position is really positive. It's such a privilege to watch the children grow in confidence as they learn to navigate the world."

- The group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9.15-11am, at The Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.



Enjoying the Teddy Bears' Picnic

A picture of health

Healthy eating and cooking on a budget are the focus of a project we are running with young families on the estate.

Ten families with toddlers are taking part in the Healthy Happy Tums programme.

Run by LCA in partnership with the West Smethwick Enterprise charity, the scheme involves one-hour weekly sessions over six weeks.

It covers topics such as healthy eating, food hygiene, cooking on a budget and trying out healthier snacks.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: "The classes are going really well and are a great opportunity for children and their parents to try out new, healthy but tasty recipes that the whole family can enjoy."



Bank Holiday office closing

There are quite a few Bank Holidays over the coming months, so this is when the LCA office will be closed:

- Friday 15th April – Good Friday
- Monday 18th April – Easter Monday
- Monday 2nd May – Early May Bank Holiday
- Thursday 2nd June – Spring Bank Holiday
- Friday 3rd June – Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday
- Monday 29th August – Summer Bank Holiday

Rent rise

Please remember that your rent will increase by an average of 4.1% from Monday April 4th 2022.

If you pay by standing order, you will need to contact your bank to change the payment to the new higher amount.

If you pay monthly, you need to multiply the new weekly rent by 52.2 weeks to show the total rent due in the year, then divide it by 12 (the number of months in a year).

So, for example, if your new rent is £100 per week, multiply £100 x 52.2 weeks = £5,220, then divide by 12 months = £435 per month. If you want to check your calculation, please give us a call.

If you are in arrears and paying an extra amount each month, you must make sure you add this extra payment to the monthly amount. Again, if you are not sure, please contact us.

Money-saving tips

At LCA we are very aware how the rising cost of living, along with spiralling energy bills, is making it harder for all of us to make ends meet financially. So here are a few money-saving ideas which may help.

Universal Credit

National charity Turn2Us estimates at least seven million people across the UK are missing out on over £15 billion of unclaimed benefits.

A rule change last November means more people are now eligible to claim Universal Credit. To check if you can claim, go to www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Pension Credit

One in three pensioners are believed to be missing out on Pension Credit. To check if you can claim, go to www.gov.uk/pension-credit

Price comparison websites

These websites let you compare a host of financial products, potentially saving you a lot of money. So check out car and home insurance, energy suppliers, credit cards, broadband bundles and mobile phone providers to find the best deal for you.

Review recurring charges

Log into your online bank account each month to check you still need all your regular payments and direct debits. Cancel subscriptions, memberships and payments for services you don't use any more.

Transfer credit card debt

If you're making large interest payments on credit card debt, consider moving it all to a 0% balance transfer credit card deal. They won't charge interest for a set time, giving you the chance to re-pay what you owe. But remember to pay off the balance before the interest-free period ends.



Food shopping

- Buy supermarket basic and budget ranges.
- Choose shops offering good reward schemes.
- Get a slow cooker, which means you can make great-tasting dishes from cheaper cuts of meat.
- Buy in bulk.
- Use price-match promises by swiping your loyalty card or registering your receipt online after every supermarket shop.
- Search for vouchers and discount deals on social media.
- Only opt for special discounts, such as buy-one-get-one-free deals, on items you need and are likely to use – for example, toilet roll, shampoo and toothpaste.
- Check the 'reduced' food aisle or labels in supermarkets. These items are usually near their sell-by date, so you'll need to eat them before then or freeze them.
- Freeze leftovers to avoid waste and store an instant meal for another day.
- Store food properly in your fridge, giving it a longer shelf-life. For example, wrap cucumbers in a tea-towel to keep them crisper.

Heating

- Lower the temperature on your heating thermostat.
- Adjust your central heating timer to switch off at night and when the house is empty in the day.
- Don't heat empty rooms. If not in regular use, turn its radiator down to the lowest setting.

Electricity

- Turn off all devices and equipment at the wall, so they are not left on standby.
- Avoid charging devices overnight as the charge continues after the battery is full.
- Don't leave extractor fans on longer than necessary.

Clothing

- Recycle old clothes in exchange for a discount. H&M gives £5 off your next shop (if £25 or more) for dropping off a bag of any retailer's old clothes. Oxfam gives a £5 M&S voucher (off a £35 spend) if you donate at least one item of M&S labelled clothing.
- Wash clothes at a lower temperature. Washing at 20°C instead of 40°C could save you 62% on energy costs.

Water bills

If you are on a low income or struggling to pay your water charges, South Staffs Water offers an 'Assure' tariff to make bills more affordable. Find out more at <https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/>

Help and support

If you need any support with budgeting or money-saving ideas, please get in touch with us. We are here to help.

But remember that rent is a priority debt, so you need to keep up with your payments or risk losing your home. If you are struggling to pay your rent, please get in touch with us as soon as possible so we can discuss how we can help.

Families go wild!

Two coachloads of Lyng residents and their friends enjoyed a wild day out at Chester Zoo this spring.

LCA originally planned to take a single coachload of day trippers to the family attraction, but we were inundated with requests to come along.

So we doubled the number of spaces on offer, selling over 100 seats in just two weeks for the March visit.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: "The trip was so popular and everyone had a great time, getting to see all the animals and learn about how they live in the wild."



Finding out about cranes



One of the tigers

Stepping back in time

Youngsters from the Lyng stepped back in time for a glimpse into 300 years of Black Country history and heritage.



Having a fun day out

Members of our 5-11 Club were treated to a day out at the Black Country Living Museum in February.

They saw history brought to life with entertaining demonstrations and quirky characters at the 26-acre site, the UK's largest open-air museum.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: "It was a freezing day but the children didn't complain once."

"They experienced what it would be like to come face-to-face with gas in the mines and visited the school for a quick lesson from times gone by."

"One child from our group and a leader were made to stand at the front with their hands on their head for ridiculous reasons such as having painted nails!"



Learning about gas in the mines

Winter wonderland

More than 100 children and their parents had a magical time in our winter wonderland over Christmas.

They created cards, wreaths and reindeer food during our Christmas Craft Day.

This year they also got the chance to navigate a snow maze, find hidden magic rings, bowl over snowmen and hook the rings onto Rudolph's antlers before having a chat with Santa.

Lyng families also enjoyed a Santa Hunt at the Black Country Museum in December, where they had to search the museum for the five senses of Christmas so they could wake up Santa and receive their gifts.



Join us

We have up to six resident places on the LCA Board, giving people living on the Lyng the chance to play a key role in our strategic management.

Meetings take place locally seven times a year and we would be delighted to hear from those who feel they can make a contribution to their community in this way.

If you want to know more, please contact us on **0121 525 5969** or email us on **info@lyng.org.uk**



Families from across the estate, along with local councillors, joined us for a spring clean litter pick on the Lyng.

Members of community charity Litter Watch also helped us collect 25 bags of rubbish during the event in February.

Volunteers then came back to the community hall for refreshments and to create some eco crafts such as bug houses out of recyclable materials.

Thank you to everyone who took part!

What's on

Here are a few dates for your diary, with community events and activities we have planned. But remember, these are only provisional dates so, if you're interested, check with us at the LCA office to find out the latest arrangements.

- Sunday 10th - Thursday 14th April – **Youth Club and 5-11 Club's residential trip to Frank Chapman Outdoor Education Centre**
- Wednesday 1st June – **Community trip to London**
- Saturday 2nd July – **5-11 Club's 10th anniversary**
- Thursday 21st July – **Toddlers Group's 'Big Toddle' for Barnardo's at Sycamore Adventure playground**
- Monday 1st - Friday 5th August – **Summer play scheme**
- Thursday 25th August – **Community summer trip to Llandudno**
- Thursday 29th September – **Macmillan Coffee Morning**
- Tuesday 25th October – **Litter pick and eco/recycling crafts**
- Saturday 3rd December - **Christmas Craft Day**
- Saturday 17th December - **Community Christmas trip to Nottingham Winter Wonderland**

We are also planning an autumn charity fundraising event and a range of adult courses throughout the year – covering subjects from candle-making to household budgeting, paediatric first aid to keeping your child safe online.

So keep a look-out on Facebook or Twitter for further dates and details on how to book.

Your local councillors

The Lyng area is covered by three local councillors. If you need to contact them, their details are below.

● Councillor Iqbal Padda



Tel: **0121 569 3124**
Email: **iqbal_padda@sandwell.gov.uk**
Mobile: **07970 236 854**

● Councillor Jackie Taylor



Mobile: **07813 364 299**
Email: **jackie_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk**

● Councillor Pam Randhawa



Mobile: **07951861263**
Email: **pam_randhawa@sandwell.gov.uk**

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