



WINTER 2021

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



# Spreading festive cheer

**Families have been enjoying a host of Christmas events on the Lyng, as we all try to make up for lockdown's impact on last year's festive celebrations.**

This winter our activities kicked off with a Community Christmas Trip to Telford in November.

Lyng residents got the chance to visit the magical Wonderland theme park, browse around the seasonal Tudor Market, go ice skating and grab some shopping centre bargains before relaxing at one of the town's many bars and restaurants.

Early in December, we held our Christmas Shopping Event at The Church of the Good Shepherd with St John. There was a range of stalls selling a

variety of goodies, plus a raffle, tombola and refreshments.

The event raised over £810 for the 4 Community Trust, which runs the Dorothy House respite centre in West Bromwich, towards the creation of a new sensory garden for children with disabilities.

Members of our Toddlers Group had fun at the Sycamore Adventure playground in Dudley on their Christmas trip earlier this month, while our 5-11 Club will be visiting the Black Country Living Museum for a Santa Hunt in the week before Christmas.

Our recent Christmas Crafts Day was also a huge success, with Lyng residents getting creative to make greetings cards, wreaths and reindeer food, with younger visitors having a catch-up with Santa in his grotto.



## Cleaning up our streets

**Local residents young and old turned out to help us tidy up our streets during Lyng's autumn litter pick.**

A big thank-you to the 20 volunteers who joined us in October, making a huge impact by clearing bags of rubbish from areas across the estate.

We really appreciate everyone's hard work, as these sorts of events are a great way to improve our neighbourhood while promoting community spirit.



## Holiday opening

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

Over the holiday season, the Lyng Community Association (LCA) office will be open on these days:

**Monday 20th December** – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

**Tuesday 21st December** – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

**Wednesday 22nd December** – 10am-

1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

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

**Friday 24th December Christmas Eve** – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

**Monday 27th December (Bank Holiday)** – CLOSED

**Tuesday 28th December (Bank Holiday)** – CLOSED

**Wednesday 29th December** – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

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

**Friday 31st December 2021** – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

**Monday 3rd January 2022 (Bank Holiday)** – CLOSED

We are open as usual from Tuesday 4th January 2022.

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 2022.

A graphic featuring a yellow house silhouette with a green window, set against a background of stacks of gold coins. The text 'Rent rise reminder' is overlaid in white.

# Rent rise reminder

**We would like to remind all LCA tenants that our rents are going up next April, in line with government guidance allowing housing associations to increase rents in line with the Consumer Price Index (3.1%) plus 1% (4.1%).**

So, along with other social housing residents across the country, you will see a rise in your rent from 2022. However, our rents are still around 40% less than those for equivalent housing in the private rented sector.

We will write to all our tenants in February 2022 to confirm your new rent.

## Paying your rent

**You can pay your rent to LCA by direct debit or standing order.**

Direct debit is a repeated payment set up by the organisation you want to pay. It involves you signing an agreement giving permission for them to take funds from your account.

The Direct Debit Guarantee protects you by making sure money taken by mistake is refunded immediately. To change or cancel a direct debit, you must contact the organisation you are paying.

A standing order is a repeated payment you set up yourself to pay other people or organisations or to transfer money between your own accounts. You can change or cancel standing orders as and when you like.

LCA encourages tenants to pay their rent by standing order. Please call us for our bank details so you can set this up with your bank online or by phone.

Alternatively, we can set up direct debit payments for any tenant through Allpay. But this means only we can change payment amounts or dates, and we need a few weeks' notice to do this.

To arrange to pay your rent by standing order or direct debit, call us on **0121 525 5969**.

- If you pay by standing order, you must change the monthly amount ready for next April's increased payment. When you receive your rent increase notification letter, you need to multiply the weekly amount by 52, then divide it by 12 to work out your monthly payment.
- If you pay by direct debit, we will amend the monthly payment (usually in March).

*Remember, standing order and direct debit payments will bounce if there isn't enough money in your account to cover them. So, to avoid bank charges for an unauthorised overdraft, we recommend setting up a small interest-free overdraft to act as a buffer.*

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or partnership.

## Lyng tenant rights

**Many of our residents have been with LCA since 2004-2006, when our first properties were developed. So here is a reminder of some of the most important rights that apply to all our tenants.**

All Lyng tenants have an assured tenancy. This provides a range of rights, some of which are statutory rights (rights in legislation) while others are contractual rights (rights written into the tenancy agreement).

The terms of your tenancy agreement can only be changed with your agreement.

The Regulator of Social Housing expects us, along with other registered providers of social housing in England, to meet regulatory standards.

*Your tenancy gives you the right to:*

- 👉 live in your home
- 👉 repair your home
- 👉 information from your landlord
- 👉 be consulted by your landlord
- 👉 be treated fairly
- 👉 take in lodgers
- 👉 pass on your tenancy after your death
- 👉 exchange with another tenant.

**To see more about these rights, please check your tenancy agreement or call us on 0121 525 5969.**

You have the right to remain as a tenant and live in your home as long as you keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement and live in the property as your only or main home.

As an assured tenant, you have 'security of tenure'. This means LCA can only evict you in specific circumstances and must satisfy a court that this is reasonable.

*The main breaches of tenancy that could lead to eviction include:*

- 🚫 failing to pay the rent or consistently paying it late
- 🚫 giving a false statement to get a tenancy
- 🚫 the tenant, people living with them or visitors causing a nuisance to other people or committing a criminal offence near the property
- 🚫 the tenant, people living with them or visitors being convicted of using the premises for illegal purposes
- 🚫 the tenant, people living with them or visitors causing serious damage to the property or to other Lyng property
- 🚫 the tenant breaking other terms in the tenancy agreement.

# Stellar week of adventures

**Lyng youngsters had an awesome time during our space-themed summer play scheme in August.**

The 32-strong group, aged 5-11, got the chance to try out a host of exciting activities during the week-long event.

They made fizzy planets, rocket-inspired snacks and cosmic T-shirts, as well as meeting amazing 'out of this world' animals.

The week was topped off with a fantastic residential trip to the Frank Chapman Outdoor Education Centre in Bewdley, complete with archery, rock climbing and forest walks.



## Enlightening trip

**Two coachloads of Lyng families and their friends had a fun-filled day out at Blackpool this autumn.**

LCA organised the October visit to see the town's famous display of seaside illuminations.

We were delighted to be able to run the event, in place of our usual summer day trip which had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions.



## Fundraising tributes

**Generous visitors helped us raise £600 for charity at our annual Macmillan Coffee Morning, doubling the amount raised last year.**

We also ran a raffle and tombola at the event, held at the church community hall in September, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

This year, we featured a 'memory wall' where visitors posted messages of support or remembrance to their loved ones who have battled cancer.



# Together with tenants

As reported in our last newsletter, LCA has adopted the new 'Together with Tenants' Charter, which includes these six commitments:

- **Relationships** – We will treat all residents with respect in all interactions. Our relationship will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
- **Communication** – Residents will receive clear, accessible, timely information from us on issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how LCA is working to address problems, how LCA is run, and information about performance on key issues.
- **Voice and influence** – Lyng will seek and value residents' views and use this information to inform decisions. Every resident will feel listened to by LCA on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.
- **Accountability** – Collectively, residents will work in partnership with LCA to independently scrutinise and hold their landlord to account for decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.
- **Quality** – Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
- **When things go wrong** – Residents will have simple, accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. They will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

We will now work with residents to explore and decide what each promise should mean to them. A Tenant Satisfaction Survey in early 2022 will help shape this work.

If you would like to be more involved, please get in touch.

## 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](mailto:iqbal_padda@sandwell.gov.uk)  
 Mobile: 07970 236 854

● **Councillor Jackie Taylor**



Mobile: 07813 364 299  
 Email: [jackie\\_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:jackie_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk)

● **Councillor Pam Randhawa**



Mobile: 07951861263  
 Email: [pam\\_randhawa@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:pam_randhawa@sandwell.gov.uk)

## Beware Scams!

Here are a few pointers to protect you from potential scams.

### Email, text and phone scams

Email, text and phone numbers can look like they're from companies you already deal with. They may ask for account details or remote access to your computer.

To check, call the company on a trusted number you've found online.

If you get a call claiming to be from a bank or the police, asking you to move money out of your account, it's a scam. Remember, only scammers will try to rush or panic you.

### Romance scams

Alarm bells should ring if you want to get to know someone from a dating website but they always have an excuse not to meet in person.

Scammers also play on emotions to get you to send cash, often using a family emergency or overseas crisis as an excuse.

Never send money to someone you haven't met in person and do your research to make sure they are who they say. Speak to someone you trust to help you decide if it's genuine.

### Social media scams

Social media adverts for goods, tickets, holidays, even cryptocurrency, could be fake. They may look and sound legitimate, but the link could take you to a bogus website.

Remember, social media accounts can be hacked and friends and family can be impersonated.

If you receive messages out of the blue asking for money, phone the person first.

**HomeSwapper**  
 The UK's biggest mutual exchange service, with over 400,000 registered users

Over 200,000 live adverts

Over 10,000 swaps successfully completed in the last six months

HomeSwapper is free for our tenants to use and is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. With easy registration and search tools, instant messaging and the unique Multiswap tool, it will help you find the swap that's right for you.

Free HomeSwapper App

Find out more at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)