



WINTER 2022

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



Pumpkin fun at the farm



Youngsters from the Lyng had a smashing day out picking pumpkins for Halloween this autumn.

A group of 40 members of our 5-11 Club joined us for a visit to Forge Mill Farm, at Sandwell Valley Country Park, in October.

As well as selecting pumpkins for carving into seasonal lantern decorations, the children got the chance to explore the farm's maze, feed the animals and play in the park.

Meanwhile, the Toddlers Group had a fang-tastic time with their own Halloween party. They dressed up in costumes, played party games, created Halloween-themed crafts and enjoyed spooky snacks.

Amy Rushton, Community Development Officer at Lyng Community Association (LCA), said: "We're really pleased at how well supported our Halloween activities were. The youngsters all had a spooktacular time and really got into the spirit of the occasion."

She added: "After seeing so many children off to school in September, we are delighted to see our Toddlers Group growing again. We now have 20 regular attenders, with lots of new faces."



FESTIVE FROLICS

Lyng residents are invited to join us for our various festive events over the coming weeks.

Our drop-in **Christmas Craft Morning** is on Saturday 3rd December, from 10am to 1pm, at The Church of the Good Shepherd with St John. There will be a host of craft activities, including creating Christmas cards and making reindeer food.

Families can stay for as much or as little time as they like at the event, which is free to attend but you do need to complete a form beforehand to reserve your place.

LCA's **Christmas Party** will be on Saturday 10th December, from 1pm

to 4pm, at the church. There will be party games, dancing and a visit from Santa who will be handing out gifts to all the children attending.

To book a place, you need to complete a form with a £5 deposit per family which will be refunded when you join us at the party.

Our trip to **Nottingham's Winter Wonderland** and Christmas Markets is on Saturday, 17th December.

Offering something for the whole family, you can check out an array of hand-made gifts, sample mulled wine and other seasonal delights, go ice-skating, ride on the carousel and the big wheel, unwind in a private igloo or explore the town's many restaurants and bars.

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 19th December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

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

Wednesday 21st December –

10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Thursday 22nd December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

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

Monday 26th December (Bank Holiday) – CLOSED

Tuesday 27th December (Bank Holiday) – CLOSED

Wednesday 28th December – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

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

Friday 30th December 2022 – 10am-1pm, phones open 1pm-4pm

Monday 2nd January 2023 (Bank Holiday) – CLOSED

We are open as usual from Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

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 2023.

Keeping you happy

The Regulator of Social Housing is creating a new system for assessing how well England's social housing landlords, such as ourselves, are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

As well as revised consumer standards, there will be a set of tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) we must report on that will make it easier to assess performance, compare landlords and hold us to account. We will publish our performance against these TSMs for you to see every year. The main TSMs are:

Overall satisfaction

Measured by tenant surveys, this includes:

- Overall satisfaction
- Satisfaction with repairs
- Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
- Satisfaction that the home is well maintained

Repairs

Measured by landlords' management information, this includes:

- Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Repairs completed within target timescale

Building safety

Measured by tenant surveys, this includes:

- Satisfaction that the home is safe

Safety checks

Measured by landlords' management information, this includes:

- Gas safety checks
- Fire safety checks
- Asbestos safety checks
- Water safety checks
- Lift safety checks



Respectful and helpful management

Measured by tenant surveys, this includes:

- Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
- Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect

Managing complaints

This includes:

- Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints (measured by tenant surveys)
- Complaints relative to the size of the landlord (measured by landlords' management information)
- Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (measured by landlords' management information)

Responsible neighbourhood management

This includes:

- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained (measured by tenant surveys)
- Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods (measured by tenant surveys)
- Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour (measured by tenant surveys)
- Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord (measured by landlords' management information)

We are now organising a tenant satisfaction survey that uses the Regulator's set questions. We will contact all Lyng tenants to take part in the survey, which will be repeated every two years. We will then publish the results so you can see them and what we plan to do to tackle areas where we have high levels of dissatisfaction.

Remember your rent

Please remember to keep paying your rent over the Christmas season to avoid those January Blues.

We appreciate that money is tight for everyone at the moment and this can be an expensive time of the year, but rent is a priority payment when it comes to your household bills.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please get in touch straightaway so we can do what we can to help.

Call **0121 525 5969**.

Help with energy bills

There has been much publicity around help with energy bills and additional cost of living payments. However, it is important you keep checking your gas/electricity bills to make sure you are receiving the £66 per month credit.

If you claim Universal Credit, Tax Credits, Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support or Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance, you should have received the second £324 Cost of Living Payment in November. If you have not, please contact Jobcentre Plus or HM Revenue and Customs.

If you are still struggling to pay your energy bills, get in touch with your supplier. They should offer you affordable payment plans or 'emergency credit' for a pre-pay meter. You may also be able to apply for a grant from them to help pay off your debt.

Depending on which supplier you are with, you can find out more on these websites:

- **British Gas Energy Support Fund** – <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/>
- **Scottish Power Hardship Fund** – <https://community.scottishpower.co.uk/t5/Extra-Help/Hardship-Fund/tap/53>

- **Ovo Energy Fund** – <https://www.ovoenergy.com/help/debt-and-energy-assistance>
- **E.ON Next Energy Fund** – <https://www.eonnext.com/policies/extra-help>
- **EDF Energy Customer Support Fund** – <https://www.edfenergy.com/PSR>
- **Bulb Energy Fund** – <https://citizensadviceplymouth.org.uk/bulb-energy/>
- **Octopus 'Octo Assist' Fund** – <https://octopus.energy/blog/struggling-to-pay/>
- **Shell Energy Support Fund** – <https://help.shellenergy.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/360001044218-I-m-struggling-to-pay-my-bill-What-should-I-do->

If you can't get a grant from your supplier, you may be able to get help from the British Gas Energy Trust. Before applying, you need to talk to a debt advisor, then check out <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/>

Sandwell Council might be able to help you pay for utility bills, food and other essential items. Contact them to find out more about their Local Welfare Provision and Household Support Fund schemes.

A day at the beach

A group of 100 Lyng tenants and their friends joined us for some seaside fun on our summer day trip.

Families made the most of what was on offer during the visit to Llandudno on a lovely warm day in August, playing on the beach, climbing the Great Orme, walking along the pier and checking out the arcades.

- **If you have any suggestions for next year's trips or community activities, we want to hear from you. Call 0121 525 5969 with your ideas.**



Summer-time clowning

Children had a fabulous week clowning around at our summer play scheme, which this year was based on the circus.

The 5-11-year-olds created themed crafts, tried their hand at a range of circus skills and enjoyed a trip to Blackpool Circus which rounded off the week.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: "The play scheme was a great success and the children loved the activities. They were particularly amazed at the acrobats and stunts performed at Blackpool Circus."

Charity success

Our annual coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support was once again a huge success.

More than 50 people attended, donating cakes and money, at the event in September – and raised an impressive £350.

Youth Club boom

Numbers are steadily increasing at our popular Youth Club, as youngsters move on from the 5-11 Club.

Recent activities have included cooking workshops, craft sessions, playing pool, video games and just relaxing with friends.

Youth Club meets on Tuesdays at 4-7pm, but call us on **0121 525 5969** if you want to check the details.



What is an emergency repair?

We are often asked what we class as an emergency repair. Here, we have put together a list of examples to help.

Emergency repairs include:

- Fire damage
- Flooding
- Burst pipe
- Severe storm damage
- Gas leak
- Blocked flue
- Major fault with the electricity supply
- Unsafe electrical fitting
- Damage to doors or windows which means your home is insecure
- Blockage in the main drains, soil pipe or toilet (if there is no other toilet in your home)
- Heating or hot water loss for elderly or vulnerable customers.

Complete loss of your water or electricity supply would also be an emergency but might be caused by a problem with South Staffs Water or your electricity provider, so you would need to contact them.

Any other event that needs immediate action to ensure your safety or security would be considered an emergency too.

Remember, you may be charged a call-out fee if:

- the repair you reported is not a genuine emergency
- you have deliberately caused the damage
- you are not at home when we visit in response to your emergency repair request.

Look after your drains!

As we all look forward to enjoying some festive feasting this Christmas, please remember not to pour fat or oil down the sink.

Hot fat turns solid when it hits cold pipes and will end up blocking your drains – as demonstrated by this photo, taken on a call-out to one of our homes.



Note: We will not attend to internal drainage blockages as an emergency repair and, if the blockage is caused by you (for example, wet wipes, baby wipes, cleaning wipes or food waste), you will be charged for the call-out (minimum charge of £114).

STAY SAFE

All Lyng homes have a carbon monoxide detector, but these need to be tested by you at least once a month.

If your carbon monoxide alarm doesn't work or is no longer in your property, please phone us straightaway so we can replace it.

Top money-saving recipes

Turkey and sweetcorn burgers

(Serves 8)

Ingredients

- 285g canned sweetcorn
- 100g stale white bread
- 500g minced turkey breast
- 1 egg
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- Use up what you have (onions, leeks or shallots work well too)
- 2½ teaspoons ground cumin
- Salt
- Ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- Sunflower oil for frying
- Burger buns or rolls to accompany with lettuce, cucumber and sweet chilli sauce

Method

- 1) Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F) or gas mark 6.
- 2) In a bowl, cover the bread with water and leave to soak for about a minute, then squeeze well and crumble into a large bowl.
- 3) Add the sweetcorn, turkey mince, egg, spring onions, ground cumin, garlic and seasoning. Use your hands to squeeze the mixture together.
- 4) Shape the mince into burgers or small meatballs about the size of a golf ball.
- 5) Heat the oil in a heavy frying pan and cook the burgers or meatballs in batches, turning them round in the pan until they are golden brown. Then drain and cook in the oven for a further 5 minutes.



Vegetable curry

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 1kg mixed vegetables
- 3 onions, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 tin chickpeas
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp tomato puree
- 300ml vegetable stock (1 stock cube)
- 400g rice
- 1 tbsp curry powder (more if you like it hotter)
- Naan bread to serve

Method

- 1) In a large pan, combine all the ingredients except the rice, add the vegetable stock and mix thoroughly.
- 2) Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and allow the mixture to simmer, stirring occasionally.
- 3) Cook for 30 minutes until the vegetables are tender and the stock has reduced to produce a nice, thick sauce.
- 4) Cook the rice as per the packet instructions.
- 5) Serve the curry with the rice and warm naan bread.



If you have any great money-saving recipes you would like to share, please send them to us at info@lyng.org.uk