



SPRING 2024

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



Spring-time animal antics

Lyng families had a cracking time over the Easter holidays during our ever-popular annual zoo trip.

Around 40 people enjoyed a smashing spring day of animal magic on our visit to Twycross Zoo in April.

Children and adults got the chance to meet a menagerie of creatures, from chimpanzees to giraffes.

They also played detective with special Easter egg hunting trails, including following the clues to work out which animals had taken the missing eggs.

LCA Community Events Co-ordinator Amy Rushton said: "The trip went really well, everyone had such a good time and the weather held out – apart from being ridiculously windy!"



Quiz success

Our second 'Quiz 'n' Chips' event for adults living on the Lyng proved another great success.

Held at Vantage Point in March, LCA tenants mingled with the retirement scheme residents and friends for a fun-filled evening.

LCA Community Events Co-ordinator Amy Rushton said: "Last year the quiz was extremely successful and everyone really enjoyed it, so we thought we'd give it another go. Again we had about 30 people attend and they had a lovely time.

"Our collaboration with Vantage Point has become really important in making our community more inclusive and accessible to all, so we are very excited to continue building this relationship."

LCA's next adult-only event, back by popular demand, will be the Race Night at Vantage Point on Friday 17th May.

Bank Holiday office closing

The LCA office, at 3 Frank Fisher Way, will be closed on:

- Monday 6th May – Early May Bank Holiday
- Monday 27th May – Spring Bank Holiday
- Monday 26th August – Summer Bank Holiday

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 booked in once the office re-opens.



Moving with the times

Lyng Community Association (LCA) recently reviewed its values, mission and vision to ensure they reflect changes in our operating environment, while remaining true to our founding principles.

The new Values and Vision Statement is outlined below but, if you have any questions about it, please let us know.

Values

Empowering, Diverse, Respectful, Considerate, Partnering, Delivering, Improving, Accountable, Honest, Open, Ethical, Learning, Passionate and Committed.

How we will deliver these values:

- To empower the local community and individual local residents.
- To promote diversity and equality of opportunity.
- To treat all stakeholders with respect and consideration.
- To promote partnership working and teamwork with stakeholders.
- To deliver high quality services and continuous improvement.
- To deliver accountability and openness.
- To operate with integrity – ensuring honesty, openness and ethical business practices.

- To learn and develop from experience.
- To develop a passionate and committed team to deliver the Association's vision.

Mission

Shaping thriving communities, building and maintaining social rented homes and supporting people.

Vision

- To make the Lyng a place that everyone can feel proud to belong to and feel part of a community that cares about the area and its residents.
- To develop high quality homes that exceed the statutory Decent Homes Standard and support individuals to live with confidence, independence and choice in the Lyng community.
- To ensure our work delivers a tangible positive impact for local communities.
- To shape high quality services that meet residents' requirements at a reasonable cost.
- To be a responsive and innovative organisation open to change and flexible in its development of new working arrangements to meet evolving standards and expectations of its service users.
- To be fully accountable to all our stakeholders.
- To maintain a strong financial base in order to deliver sustainable homes and services to the Lyng community.

Rent rise explained

Our rents are 'social rents' set by the Government. The Regulator of Social Housing is responsible for ensuring housing associations like ourselves increase rents in line with the Government's directive.

This year the Government decided to increase rents by its original method, calculated on the rate of inflation over 12 months to the previous September. That means a rise based on the September 2023 Consumer Price Index of 6.7% plus 1% – a total rent increase of 7.7%.

What we considered

The LCA Board carefully considered our organisation's financial position and restrictions before approving this 7.7% rent increase.

It noted that between 2016 and 2020, along with other housing associations in England, the Regulator compelled us to reduce rents by 1% annually. But, while our income fell every year, the cost of repairs, energy and salaries continued to rise.

In 2015 rent for a typical Lyng property (three-bedroom house) was £101.68. A 7.7% rise would increase it to £122.67 from April 2024 – a total increase of 21% over nine years. This equates to an average annual rent increase of 2.1%.

Our Board members felt that this was not unreasonable, particularly taking into account the need to ensure Lyng's future financial stability.

Where our rents go

We will use our rental income to:

- continue to provide and improve the services we deliver to you
- continue to invest in maintaining and improving our homes through day-to-day repairs and planned maintenance programmes
- build more homes for people in housing need.

Service charges

Our service charges – which are eligible for Universal Credit or Housing Benefit – cover the cost of extra services provided to your home.

For houses, this includes lighting and cleaning of car parking and communal areas, maintaining planted areas and preparing for future reinstatement work or replacement of equipment.

For flats, this includes cleaning and lighting of communal areas, maintaining planted areas, fire alarms, emergency lighting and smoke clearance equipment, communal TV aerials, door entry systems and their replacement.

Improving complaint handling

The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman have launched a new Complaint Handling Code for social landlords such as ourselves.

It aims to ensure our complaints procedures are accessible, fair and efficient, and ultimately lead to improved services for residents.

Key aspects of the code include:

- universal definition of a complaint
- providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it, including their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service
- the structure of the complaints procedure
- ensuring fairness, with a resident-focused process
- taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
- creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
- demonstrating learning in annual reports
- annual self-assessment against the code.

If you need to make a complaint about our services, please contact us:

- **Phone Customer Services on 0121 525 5969, who will log it and ensure it gets to the right person straightaway**
- **Email ralleyl@btconnect.com**
- **Write to us**
- **Visit our office at 3 Frank Fisher Way, West Bromwich, B70 7AW, to speak to our Customer Services team.**

Resident delight at new kitchen

A Lyng tenant is over the moon with her new kitchen, after we began our replacement programme this spring.

We have started modernising kitchens in our oldest properties, the 47 which were built in 2004, starting with Eileen Etheridge's home in March this year.

Mrs Etheridge, who has been an LCA tenant for 10 years, said: *"The old kitchen was very dated but my new kitchen is fabulous – very modern, accessible and easy to clean. The layout and colour have really opened up the room, making it feel bigger. It certainly works better for me."*

"The workmen were absolutely brilliant, getting everything completed in five days with minimal disruption. The LCA team have been very helpful and understanding too, checking that everything has been going according to plan. I'm so pleased with it all."

The Government's Decent Homes Standard requires that social housing kitchens should be replaced after 20 years and bathrooms after 30 years. Depending on when each property was built, we will continue

upgrading kitchens over the coming years and begin our bathroom replacements in 2034.

Here is our planned programme of work:

- The Sidings (1-35), Old Flour Mills (even numbers), Charity Bick Way (even numbers 2-30), Turks Head Way (8-22) **Kitchens 2024 – Bathrooms 2034**
- Charity Bick Way (odd numbers 1-41), Turks Head Way (24-28), Lyng Lane (201-221), Southwell Walk (even numbers 2-10) **Kitchens 2026 – Bathrooms 2036**
- Frank Fisher Way (1-44), Lyng Lane (87-93), St Johns Mews, Dingley Bells, Downing Crescent, Lyttleton Street, Old Flour Mills (odd numbers), The Sidings (37-39), Charity Bick Way (36) **Kitchens 2031 – Bathrooms 2041**
- Newhall Street, Pleasant Street, Sams Lane, Lyng Lane (even numbers 200-208 and 223-227), Southwell Walk (odd numbers), Charity Bick Way (43 and 45) **Kitchens 2032 – Bathrooms 2042**
- Leopard Lane **Kitchens 2036 – Bathrooms 2046**



Young litter-busters take to the streets

A team of youngsters took to the streets to help clear the Lyng of rubbish during their school holidays.

The volunteers collected over 10 sacks of waste dumped around the estate during the February half-term litter pick.

They were rewarded for their hard work with some chocolate treats, before trying their hand at 'eco crafts' during a workshop held in the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

LCA General Manager Tony Nash said: *"We think it's important to encourage children to take pride in their local area, so we are delighted so many young people turned out to help us keep the estate tidy."*

Earlier in the half-term week, around 30 people gathered for our Community Cinema showing of the Disney film Elemental in the church hall.



After-dark partying

Members of our Youth Club had a fabulous time on a trip to a local indoor adventure park this spring.

Thirty of our 10-17-year-olds made the most of their visit to Flip Out Sandwell in Oldbury, in March.

They got the chance to use the trampolines, penalty shoot-out football zone, slam ball basketball area, soft play obstacle course, inflatable slide, the jump parkour area, foam pits and battle beams.

There was also a special party atmosphere at the two-hour 'After Dark' session, complete with music and disco lights.

LCA Community Events Co-ordinator Amy Rushton said: "There were so many activities to enjoy and the young people absolutely loved it. It was wonderful to see them having such a great time."

What's on

Here are some of the events we have planned for the coming months.

- **Friday 17th May** – Adults-only Race Night at Vantage Point
- **Saturday 29th June** – Community trip to Stratford-upon-Avon
- **Sunday 21st July** – Fun Day at Oak House Museum
- **Monday 29th July - Friday 2nd August** – Wild West-themed Summer Play Scheme
- **Saturday 24th August** – Community seaside trip to Porthcawl
- **Tuesday 27th August** – Community Cinema
- **Friday 4th October** – Adults-only event, to be confirmed
- **Saturday in late October/early November (date to be confirmed)** – Drayton Manor trip and fireworks
- **Saturday 30th November** – Winter Craft Morning
- **Saturday 7th December** – Adults-only trip to Bath Christmas Market
- **Saturday 14th December** – Children's Christmas Party
- **Saturday 21st December** – Family Christmas trip (to be confirmed)

Contact the LCA office or keep an eye on our Facebook page for further dates and details on how to book.



Young chefs cause a stir

Families are picking up cookery tips and learning about healthy eating at workshops run for members of our Toddlers Group.

LCA has teamed up with West Smethwick Enterprise to run the cookery classes, based around recipes for healthy meals on a budget.

Parents and children are having fun discovering new ideas and skills, with all participants being awarded a certificate upon completion of a three-workshop course, along with a booklet containing more recipes and activities.



Festive round-up

LCA's Christmas celebrations helped get everyone into the festive spirit on the Lyng.

Ninety people from across the estate joined us for our Children's Christmas Party. As well as visiting Santa for a gift, youngsters played party games such as musical statues and 'pin the nose on Rudolph'.

A group of 30 Lyng residents came along on our community trip to Manchester Christmas Market. Despite the chilly weather, it was a good day out with lots to do at the eight markets spread across the city.

We are also pleased to say we are continuing to bridge the generation gap between young and old on the Lyng, with members of our 5-11 Club entertaining Vantage Point residents and their families with their carol singing in December.

Some of the children were even brave enough to perform solos. Residents at the retirement scheme gave all of the children a chocolate selection box each to thank them for their visit.

Just before Christmas, 40 people also joined us for our Santa Safari family Christmas trip to West Midlands Safari Park.

They experienced the Safari Drive-Through, walked through the Winter Wonderland to meet Santa in his grotto and visited the elves in their workshop to choose a present, before visiting Mrs Claus' Kitchen to enjoy a drink and a festive treat.

The trip was so well received that we plan to organise another family Christmas trip this year.

