



SPRING 2025

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



Race night is runaway success

Lyng residents and their friends are making the most of our increasingly popular adults-only community events.

A group of 30 people from the estate joined residents at Vantage Point retirement scheme for a horse racing night in March.

The evening, which included a fish supper, raised over £100 for Lyng's Toddlers Group, 5-11 Club and Youth Club.

Lyng Community Association (LCA) is now working with the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John to organise another adults-only event this spring.

We hope to run a quiz night at the church on Friday 23rd May, with crusty cobs and other refreshments available throughout the evening – so keep an eye out for more details.

LCA Community Events Co-ordinator Amy Rushton said: "We are delighted to be working with our fellow community partners to organise activities that appeal to people of different ages across the estate.

"We've had lots of good feedback from our adults-only events, so we hope they continue to go from strength to strength."



Bank Holiday office closing

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

- Good Friday – 18th April
- Easter Monday – 21st April
- Early May Bank Holiday – 5th May
- Spring Bank Holiday – 26th May

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.

Eggs-tra Easter family fun

Families from the Lyng are invited to join our first-ever estate-wide Easter Egg Hunt during the school holidays.

The event takes place on Tuesday 22nd April, when participants will be invited to collect numbered eggs hidden around the estate, then exchange them for a chocolate treat.

We are grateful to Morrisons and Sainsbury's for donating the gift cards which allowed LCA to pay for the Easter eggs we'll be handing out.

- To book your place, call us on **0121 525 5969**.



Make your voice heard

Our next Tenant Satisfaction Survey will take place this summer, seeking your views on our homes and services.

The Regulator of Social Housing has said housing associations like LCA must carry out such surveys every two years, and our last one was in 2023. We are appointing an independent market research agency to conduct this work during May and June.

We will soon be sending letters to all our tenants with a leaflet introducing the agency we are using and giving more details about the survey – so look out for this dropping through your letterbox.

You will then receive a text about the survey, providing a link to complete the form online.

You also have the option of a paper survey, if you prefer, which will include a prepaid envelope for it to be returned free of charge.

Once we have gathered and analysed the results, we will send a report to all tenants and draw up an action plan in response to what you have told us.



Top team

We all know the Lyng is a great place to live – but it's also a great place to work!

The LCA staff team has stayed the same for over six years, reflecting how much we love our work, the estate and its residents.

But time marches on and our finance officer Joan Goodyear, who joined us in December 2018, is now retiring – and we wish her well.

Stepping into her shoes is Jonathan Walker, who has a long track record as finance manager in the local authority sector. We are delighted to welcome him to the team, and residents may get to hear his voice when he occasionally answers the office phone.

Improving our estate

We asked for your ideas about how to improve the Lyng estate in the winter edition of Lyngline.

Obviously, we can only carry out improvements on land or buildings we own. So, for example, we can't provide more parking areas or introduce resident-only parking zones.

However, we are still keen to hear any ideas that might improve the look of the estate – so please let us have your suggestions.

How to complain

LCA recently adopted a new Complaints Policy which reflects our aims to welcome feedback, improve our relationships with residents, and work with you to learn and improve.

We want to ensure it is easy for you to be heard and understood, in line with the regulatory framework for social housing and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

You can complain in person or by letter, email or phone. We will then write to you confirming details of the complaint and the deadlines within which we will respond.

- **Check out our full Complaints Policy at <https://lyng.org.uk/complaints/> or pick up a printed copy from the LCA office. You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice on **0300 111 3000**.**



Rent arrears

Your tenancy agreement is a contract between you and LCA. We agree to provide an affordable quality home and attend to reported repairs in a timely manner, while you agree to pay your rent on time and maintain your home to the best of your ability.

We take a fair but firm approach to collecting rent, in line with current housing legislation, best practice and the Regulator of Social Housing's expectations.

If you experience financial difficulties and cannot pay your rent, your account goes into arrears and we follow a prescribed process to recover the debt.

Initially, our Housing Officer will contact you to agree a plan. Often, we can arrange to recover the debt over a period of time or once you receive your benefits, and we will pause any legal action. We

can also provide details of where to get benefits, budgeting and debt advice.

If agreed payments are not made and arrears become excessive, we must take action. Our Housing Officer will liaise with you at every stage, advising how to repay arrears and pause further legal action. But, as a last resort, we will seek to end the tenancy and evict the tenant for non-payment of rent.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please contact our Housing Officer on **0121 525 5969** as soon as possible so we can work together to resolve the situation.

- **For further information about benefits, debt or budgeting advice, check out <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/MoneyMatters> or call Sandwell & Walsall Citizens Advice's Debt Helpline on **0800 240 4420**.**

Fantastic festive entertainment

Youngsters had a fabulous time at our Christmas events over the festive season.

Around 40 people joined our family trip to the 'Winter Wonderland' at Conkers Discovery Centre, in Leicestershire, in December.

Despite very windy weather, they explored the forest, tried their hand at activities such as modelling balloon hats and met Santa in his grotto.

A week before, around 100 people came along to Lyng's 'Jingle

Jubilee'. This, our first attempt at combining the Christmas Craft Morning and Children's Christmas Party, was a huge success.

Revellers enjoyed a host of craft activities, including making Christmas cards and reindeer food, before meeting (and even getting the chance to dance with!) Santa.

Unfortunately, our planned adults-only trip to Bath Christmas Market was cancelled by Somerset Council due to bad weather but we hope to run a successful trip there this coming winter.



Calling all tenants

LCA is holding another of our Tenants Meetings this spring, when residents are invited to meet our Chair and General Manager to discuss any issues or concerns.

The meeting will be on Thursday 1st May at 7pm in the LCA office, so please add the date to your diary!

Join us

Our Tenants Panel allows you to meet with LCA's senior staff and help shape changes to our policies and procedures.

Meetings are informal with tea/coffee and biscuits for an hour, along with an open discussion on how we can improve our services. We fit meetings around when you are available, to get as many people along as possible. So, if you have any ideas or suggestions, we would be delighted to hear from you. For more information, call **0121 525 5969**.

Pushing for action

Last year we organised a public meeting for all Lyng residents with our local councillors to raise issues that are Sandwell Council's responsibility, such as street parking, litter and the park area.

After lively discussion, councillors suggested a further meeting with the council officers who head up these services. We are keen to host this meeting but are still awaiting some proposed dates from the council.

In the meantime, if you would like to contact one of the Greets Green and Lyng councillors directly, here are their details:

- **John Giles** – Call 07816 353752 or email john1_giles@sandwell.gov.uk
- **Jackie Taylor** – Call 07813 364299 or email jackie_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk
- **Pam Randhawa** – Call 07951 861263 or email pam_randhawa@sandwell.gov.uk

What's on

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

- **Saturday 19th April** – Trip to Chester Zoo
 - **Saturday 28th June** – Trip to London
 - **Saturday 16th August** – Seaside trip to Conwy
 - **Monday 4th - Friday 8th August** – Spies and Ninjas-themed Summer Play Scheme
 - **Monday 18th - Friday 22nd August** – Superhero-themed Summer Play Scheme
- Both play schemes are open to 5-11-year-olds, cost £30 per child per week and include different crafts and at least one trip. Bookings now open.*

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

Free leisure activities

Did you know there are lots of free or low-cost activities on offer for children in the school holidays at West Bromwich Leisure Centre?

Current offers include:

- No joining fee for swimming lessons
- Free swimming sessions in school holidays for Sandwell residents aged 5-17 (proof of age and council tax needed to register)
- Soft play area (unlimited stay for £3.50)
- Big Sister programme for girls aged 9-15 – free swimming and exercise sessions, plus gym use for the 11-15-year-olds, if parents claim benefits (or £9 per month for other girls).

For more details, check out <https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/west-bromwich-leisure-centre/>

Beware bogus callers

If you have an unexpected visit or call from someone claiming to be from, acting on behalf of or with the approval of Lyng Community Association, it's important you check they are genuine.

Common scams to watch out for

- Unexpected visits or calls – anyone saying they need to inspect your home for repairs or maintenance.
- Urgent claims – someone creating a sense of urgency, claiming there's a serious problem needing immediate attention.
- 'Free' offers – anyone offering free upgrades or improvements to your home, often asking for upfront payments.
- Phishing – phone or email attempts to obtain personal information, such as bank details or passwords.

How to protect yourself

- Check the caller or visitor's identity – call LCA direct using a number you know is correct.
- Be cautious of unexpected requests – never let anyone into your home unless you are sure who they are and why they are there.
- Don't share personal or financial information with anyone contacting you unexpectedly.
- Use security features – consider installing a door peephole or viewer to see who is there before opening it.

If you suspect you have been approached by a bogus caller

Report it immediately to:

- Police – call **999** or **101**
- Lyng Community Association – call us on **0121 525 5969** so we can confirm if the caller is genuine
- Trading Standards – find your local office at <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office>
- Action Fraud – at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Recycling reminder

Just a reminder to all residents living in flats on the Lyng, Sandwell Council will NOT collect any recycling bins containing plastic bags.

If you collect your recycling in a black refuse bag, you must empty out the contents into the recycling bin and then put the used bag into the general waste bin.

Every bin has a large sticker showing what can and cannot be put into it – so please follow the rules and encourage your neighbours to do the same.

Save on your water bill

If you are on a low income or struggling to pay your water bill, you may be eligible for help.

South Staffordshire Water offers the Assure tariff discount to customers who receive Pension Credit or whose annual household income is less than £22,011 (or more if you have dependent children living with you).

To find out if you qualify, go to <https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/household/my-bills-and-payments/my-bill-explained/other-charges-and-tariffs/assure-tariff>