



## Lyng youngsters go football crazy

**Youngsters from the Lyng got the chance to experience the thrill of live football, thanks to a recent outing organised by our youth club.**

A group of eight club members visited the Hawthorns to see West Bromwich Albion play Sheffield United in February.

Amy Rushton, Community Development Officer at Lyng Community Association (LCA), said: *"It was really exciting for our young people to enjoy the atmosphere of watching an Albion match live at their home ground."*

*"Everyone had a good time and they're keen to return as soon as possible – despite the match result!"*

The trip was made possible thanks to the Baggies' official sponsor, Ideal Boilers, gifting tickets to the LCA Youth Club.



Lyng youngsters at the Baggies' ground

## Media Club re-launches

**Families turned out in force to celebrate the re-launch of our popular Media Club this year.**

We marked the occasion by buying out a screen at the Odeon Cinema in West Bromwich, then inviting regular attenders of the former Curiosity Club, their parents and members of LCA Youth Club to come along and watch a showing of the film 'A Dog's Way Home'.



Getting creative

We were delighted that a total of 80 people joined us for the event.

Since then, Media Club members have enjoyed a variety of activities including workshops with cartoon artist Olly.

Olly worked with Lyng youngsters for three weeks, teaching them how to draw cartoon characters and create fictional worlds.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: *"These workshops were a great success. The young people involved went away with new skills, new knowledge and some animated cells that they had made with Olly's help."*



Olly offers cartoon tips

## Spring Bank Holidays

**The LCA office will close for the Spring Bank Holidays on Mondays, 6th and 27th May.**

For emergency repairs only on these days, please call **0300 333 6540**.

## Grow your own!

**If you fancy growing your own vegetables or fruit, why not take on a section of our Community Allotment for free?**

A couple of Lyng residents have started planting crops on the plot, which is behind the Kebub restaurant in Bromford Lane.

There is a shed, some tools, a nearby toilet and water tap. If you're interested, please get in touch. Call us on **0121 525 5969**.





Meeting Santa

## Steam-powered family fun

**Lyng families stepped aboard a vintage steam train for a magical start to their Christmas festivities.**

A group of 28 young people – members of our Toddlers Group and the former Curiosity Club – were joined by their parents for a journey on the Severn Valley Railway's Santa Steam Special in December.

After travelling past West Midlands Safari Park on the way to Arley station, the youngsters visited Santa's Grotto where they met Father Christmas and were given presents.

LCA Community Development Officer Amy Rushton said: *"It was a fantastic day. The children were in awe of the steam train, with one of the boys telling his mom it was 'the best Christmas ever'. We're delighted it went so well."*



The Santa Steam Special

## Service charges explained

**As most of you are aware, part of your weekly rent is a charge covering the cost of extra services that LCA provides.**

**If you live in a flat, your service charge covers:**

- **power supply to communal lights in corridors, hallways and outside your block**
- **weekly cleaning of corridors and hallways**
- **maintaining planted areas and all external areas around the block (two visits per month in the summer but once a month in winter)**
- **providing and maintaining the door entry system, fire alarm and emergency lighting**
- **providing carpets**
- **window cleaning (two visits per year)**
- **providing and repairing unadopted areas (those not maintained by the council).**

**If you live in a house, the service charge covers:**

- **power supply to communal lights in areas such as car parks**
- **maintaining planted and external areas (two visits per month in summer but once a month in winter)**
- **providing and repairing unadopted areas.**

We currently have various specialist contractors carrying out the above work but you are most likely to see Sharon, of SP Property Maintenance, who provides our cleaning and landscaping services.

**Please remember that LCA is not responsible for clearing litter from public roads and pavements.**

## Parking update

**LCA often gets calls about parking problems on the estate, particularly on public roads.**

The Lyng's original planning conditions were that each household should only be permitted one parking space, which means there will always be pressure on parking throughout the estate.

Previously, Sandwell Council indicated it would introduce a Resident Parking scheme for Lyng Lane and St John's Mews, but it seems this is not going ahead – so, for now, the problem of cars being left all day by commuters looks likely to continue.

Unfortunately LCA has no control over this issue, but residents can raise their concerns direct with the council's parking department or with their local councillors.

## Festive treats

**Over 100 children and their parents enjoyed some festive fun at our Christmas Party in December.**

Held at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John, there were party games, plenty of food, a disco and the chance to meet Father Christmas in his grotto.



Getting into the festive spirit





# Universal Credit – the latest

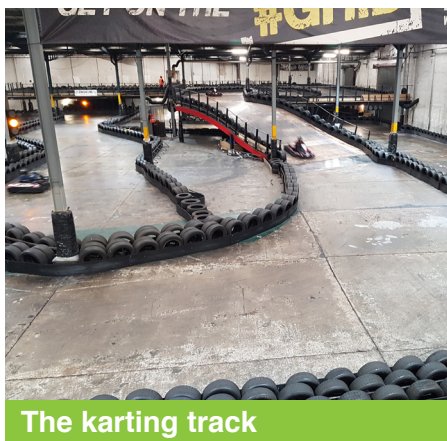
Sandwell residents claiming tax credits are currently being moved over to the new welfare benefit, **Universal Credit**. Here is a handy checklist to help you prepare for the change.

- 1) **Take care of your rent first.** Get your rent account into credit by paying a little extra on your current rent now, to reduce the risk of being in arrears when you are switched over to Universal Credit.
- 2) **Make sure you have a bank account.** You need a bank or similar account to receive payments.
- 3) **Set up a Direct Debit.** The quickest and easiest way to pay your rent. Call us at LCA to set this up.
- 4) **Budget for monthly payments.** Universal Credit is paid once a month IN ARREARS, so you need to pay your rent first and other bills, leaving enough money for essential outgoings for the rest of the month.
- 5) **Manage your money.** Get help with budgeting – contact the Welfare Rights advice line on **0121 569 3158** or email **welfarerights\_team@sandwell.gov.uk**, or check out **www.sandwell.betteroff.org.uk**
- 6) **Apply for Local Council Tax Reduction.** Make a claim to Sandwell Council.
- 7) **Gather information for your Universal Credit claim.** You will need details of your postcode, National Insurance number, bank or similar account, accommodation, savings, income, childcare costs, Child Benefit reference numbers, photo ID (eg. driving licence or passport) and any other benefits.
- 8) **Get online.** Make sure you have a valid email address. If you need help, contact UC Start support at Citizens Advice Sandwell on **0121 726 3408**.

For more information, go to  
<http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/universalcredit>



Pancake making



The karting track

## Fun for all

Young people have been making the most of the packed programme of activities run by LCA Youth Club in recent months.

The club now has 80 members from across the B70 and B71 postcode areas, with a turn-out of around 30 youngsters at each session.

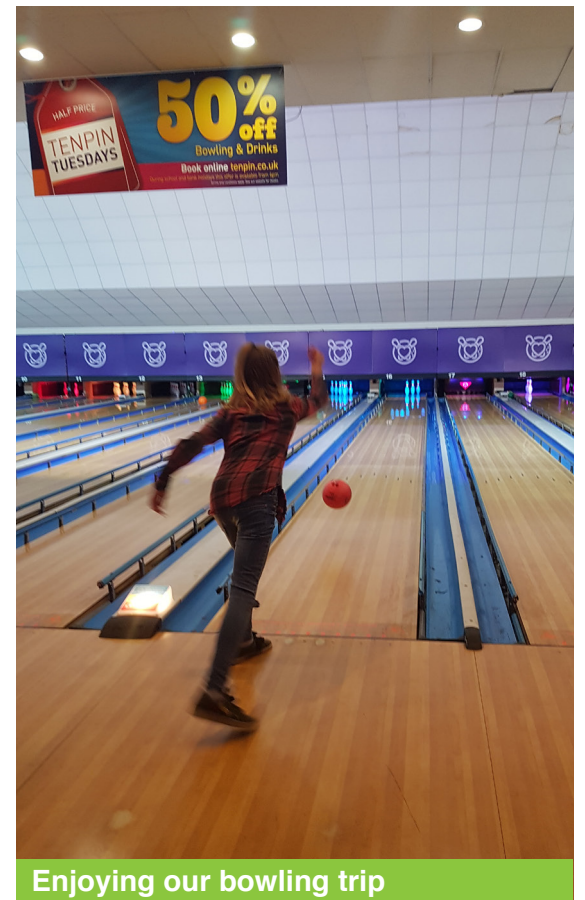
Recent events have included a Chinese New Year crafts event, plus a pancake making and decorating workshop.

A group of 22 youth club members went 10-pin bowling in Dudley during the school half-term holiday, followed by a visit to Nando's.

Another 23 youngsters went go-karting in Oldbury in March, before enjoying a pizza and drink after their race.

A residential trip to an outdoor activity centre is now being planned for the summer, so those who regularly attend the youth club will get the chance to spend a few nights away from home with their friends.

They will be able to try activities such as high ropes, geocaching and bushcraft during the visit to the Frank Chapman Centre in Bewdley, from 19th to 21st August.



Enjoying our bowling trip

## Did you know?

The LCA team gets lots of queries about various issues each week, but there are some matters which we have no control over so we have to advise people to contact other agencies for help.

Here are the top five subjects we are regularly asked about, but which LCA is not responsible for.

- 1) **Litter** on the park in Lyng Lane and on adopted pavements or roads. Litter collection is controlled by Sandwell Council which schedules sweeping visits, on average, every six weeks.
- 2) **Street lighting.** Sandwell Council owns the roads, so only they can repair broken lamps.
- 3) **Speeding traffic and parking issues.** Again, the council owns the highways so only they can address these issues.
- 4) **Anti-social behaviour or criminal acts** carried out by non-Lyng residents in public areas of the estate. LCA only has powers to deal with tenants so, if there are problems with noisy or drunken behaviour by others, the police need to be called.
- 5) **Children's play area.** This was owned by Barratt West Midlands but is due to be transferred over to Sandwell Council. LCA did express an interest in taking over the park area but decided it would be far too expensive to maintain.

## Seaside trip

Lyng residents will get a taste of some sun, sea and sand on our summer trip to Brean, in Somerset.

LCA is organising the day trip for 14th August, so look out for more details on how to book your place.



## Storytelling adventures

Classic children's stories will take centre stage during our Summer Play Scheme, which will be themed around the tales of Roald Dahl.

Each day will feature a host of activities relating to a different one of the author's famous children's books.

There will also be a special trip during the week-long scheme, which runs from 29th July and is open to up to 40 youngsters.

## Lyng spring clean

We will be taking to the streets for a litter pick to tidy up the estate this spring.

Everyone is welcome to join us for the event on 25th April, from 10am at Lyng park.



## Toddlers date change

Our popular Toddlers Group now runs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 9.15am to 11am.

Prices remain the same at £2 per family. As well as the range of fun activities on offer, children are given either toast or a snack, and parents have the option of a hot drink.



## Silver screen magic

Our Community Cinema events are proving popular with Lyng residents of all ages.

We screened the heart-warming animated film 'Inside Out' in February, and will be showing 'The Greatest Showman' on 23rd April from 12 noon at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John.

## Have your say

Housing association residents are invited to give their views at the West Midlands Tenant Summit at Millennium Point, in Birmingham, on 1st May, from 10am to 3pm.

Tenants will be able to talk about what matters to them in terms of service and their relationship with landlords, and hear from speakers such as National Housing Federation Chief Executive Kate Henderson and Birmingham City Councillor Sharon Thompson.

The interactive discussion will feed into the national Together with Tenants consultation. Let us know if you'd like to attend and we'll sort out tickets.

## Keep up online

You can keep up with what's happening on the Lyng and at LCA by going online.

Check out our:

- **website** – <http://www.lyng.org.uk/> – for an overview of what's going on
- **Facebook page** – <https://www.facebook.com/lyngcommunityassociation/> – to see photos of our events
- **Twitter page** – @LyngLCA – for the latest news and updates.

## Adult courses

LCA is planning to run more adult courses over the course of the year, on a variety of topics.

We are still confirming the details, but will keep you updated about what will be on offer and how to sign up for them.