



## Discover hidden talents this New Year

**Lyng residents are being invited to explore their talents and boost their skills, thanks to an exciting line-up of 'taster' courses this New Year.**

From January, Lyng Community Association (LCA) is launching a rolling programme of four-week courses throughout the year.

Subjects will include digital photography, healthy cooking, watercolour painting, card making, cake baking and arts and crafts.

There will also be adult education courses to help people improve their numeracy and literacy, plus a course for children about road safety.

Sessions will be held at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John. Courses will be open

to all, but available at a reduced cost for LCA tenants.

LCA Office Manager Liane Ralley said: "The idea is that, instead of people having to go into college, we will bring college here.

"We'll be running a range of bite-sized courses which will appeal to different people, combining having fun with learning new skills."

- **Look out for leaflets, with details about the various courses, coming through your letterbox over the coming weeks – and we'll keep you posted in future editions of Lyngline.**



## Getting crafty

**Families got into the seasonal spirit at a Winter Craft session in November.**

Young and old alike enjoyed various arts and crafts activities, including making decorative fir cone animals, gifts, cards, hot chocolate – and even reindeer food!



The event, held at the church, also saw the launch of our ever-popular Christmas card making competition.

## Christmas opening hours

**The LCA office will close at 4pm on Friday 22nd December for Christmas and New Year.**

**It will re-open on Tuesday 2nd January – from 10am to 1pm for personal callers and 10am to 4pm for phone enquiries.**

**The office will be open for phone enquiries only on 27th, 28th and 29th December from 10am to 4pm.**

**For emergency repairs while we are closed, please call 0300 333 6540.**

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers.**

## FESTIVE FUN

**Festive fun and games will entertain youngsters at our Children's Christmas Party this month.**

Held in the church hall on Saturday 16th December, there will be the usual grotto, festive activities and disco to get everyone into the yuletide spirit.



# Keeping the Lyng spick and span

Many of you will have noticed that we have a new landscaping contractor working across the estate.

We still have Sharon Philips carrying out cleaning of communal areas inside our blocks of flats every fortnight, but she is now also cleaning outdoor areas such as car parks.

Here's a reminder of the schedule for these cleaning visits:

- landscaping (gardening) and outdoor areas – twice a month from April to October, once a month from November to March
- inside communal areas of flats – every fortnight throughout the year.



Sharon Philips



## Day-trippers make merry

**A coachload of Lyng residents picked up some bargains on our day trip to Cardiff Christmas Market.**

Forty people came along for the November visit to browse the stalls for unusual gifts while enjoying some festive cheer.



● **LCA will be organising more day trips for next summer, winter and possibly in the spring too. If you have any ideas on where we should visit – particularly places which might appeal to people in their 20s and 30s, rather than just young families – please let us know. Call LCA on 0121 525 5969. We want to hear from you!**

# SURVEY SPARKS ACTION

**Following your feedback in this year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey, we have taken action to tackle some of the issues you flagged up.**

## DOG FOULING/ STREET CLEANING

We have asked Sandwell Council to step up street cleaning visits, to remove mess more quickly. The council is working to address this problem and is urging residents to call **0121 368 1177** to report dog mess.

Our team is also monitoring the factory units in Lyng Lane for any uncontrolled waste blowing off the site.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

We are running a Children in Need-funded youth project which offers activities and events to help youngsters grow in confidence, discover new interests, develop their talents and explore exciting opportunities. Turn to page 4 to see what our youth club has been up to recently.



## NEIGHBOUR NUISANCE

This is an issue we are keen to address. If you are having such problems, we want to help, so please call our Housing Officer Stuart Cant on **0121 525 5969**.

## PARKING PROBLEMS

LCA has contacted Sandwell Council for several years about parking permits but so far the council hasn't wanted to change the permit arrangements. We will continue to press for additional spaces to be made available.



## REPAIRS SERVICE

We have met with our main repairs contractor, Bournville Property Care, to insist their team keeps us up to date about repairs which are delayed due to a wait for parts or because there have been difficulties

getting into one of our homes. We have asked for updates on all outstanding repairs so we can take action to overcome any problems.

## PLANTED AREAS

It was previously agreed that Barratt West Midlands would not replace damaged trees on the green space in Newhall Street but instead plant trees across the area. Unfortunately, this has not happened so we are discussing with other interested parties how to get the planting work completed.



# Charity event stirs up ideas

**A charity fundraiser sparked some bright ideas while bringing in cash for a good cause.**

Lyng residents gathered for the Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John at the end of September.

The event – which raised £200 for Macmillan Cancer Support – included the raffle of a cake donated by an LCA board member.

At the gathering, we asked people to come up with ideas to make life on the Lyng even better. One suggestion was to run useful courses for our residents and we've already acted on the idea, as you can see from our front page story.

- **Do you have any suggestions for us? If so, get in touch – call 0121 525 5969.**



## Rent reminder

**Please make sure you pay your rent over Christmas!**

# A helping hand

**Lyng Community Association is a charity that provides housing and community development services to residents on the Lyng estate.**

As such, we have a charitable fund so that we can grant small amounts of money to our tenants to help with expenses they cannot afford related to education and training, and also to support community activities and celebration events.

If you think you might benefit from this fund, contact

us on **0121 525 5969** for more details and an application form.

**Please note: This fund is only available to LCA tenants, and applications will not be considered for costs related to housing, rent, service charges or utility bills.**

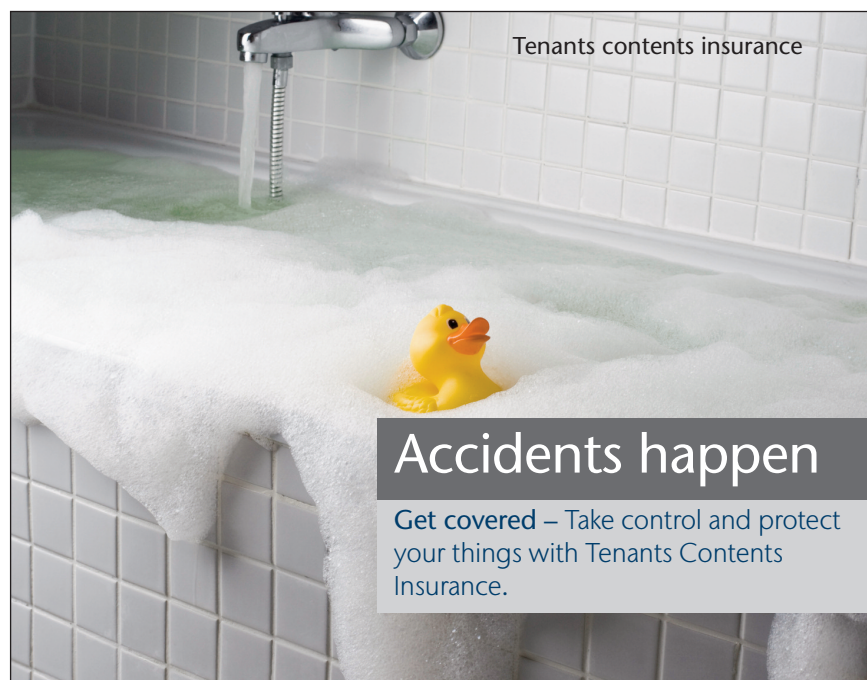
## Your neighbourhood takes off

**Would you like to have a say in what goes on in your neighbourhood and help shape the Lyng's future? If so, why not think about joining the LCA board as a tenant member?**

As a board member you can help us decide the estate's future direction, influence decisions about our services and activities, and help us achieve value for money in our work, as well as challenging us about issues you are not happy about.

It is also a great way to boost your knowledge about a range of subjects – such as housing, finance, project and estate management – while developing your skills and experience. If you're looking for work, it's also great for your CV!

We want to be the best landlord we can be – and you can play your part in achieving that. So call us on **0121 525 5969** to find out more.



**Prices start from just £1.11\* per week...**

- No excess – nothing to pay when you make a claim
- Contents replaced as new\*\*
- Rented goods included

Call our insurance team on **0300 555 6666**

\*£1.11 is based on standard cover for £8,000 of standard contents cover.  
\*\*This excludes clothing and household linen  
Quote is subject to eligibility criteria.  
Premiums quoted include insurance premium tax (IPT) at the appropriate rate.  
The policy is provided by Aviva Insurance Limited

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## Repairs - whose responsibility?

**As your landlord, LCA is responsible for repairs needed due to wear and tear over time.**

However, we will re-charge you for the cost of any repairs needed because of damage – deliberate or accidental – caused by you, someone else in your household or visitors.

Repairs which are your responsibility – and for which you will be recharged – include:

- unblocking sinks, toilets or drains due to misuse
- replacing keys, fobs and locks where the lock is not faulty (eg. when keys are lost)
- getting into a property where you have locked yourself out
- replacing lightbulbs or fluorescent tubes
- work needed due to you not carrying out routine repairs that are your responsibility or not reporting repairs which are our responsibility
- damage caused by faulty appliances or installation.



# A world of opportunity

Computer games, T-shirt making and day trips have been entertaining youngsters on the Lyng over the last few months.

Our new youth club has run a host of events and activities, including a T-shirt creating workshop at the Fab Lab in West Bromwich and a war gaming session with the Infamous Community Arts group.

Members also enjoyed a visit to the Black Country Museum and the Birmingham Military Tattoo in November.



LCA Office Manager Liane Ralley said: “The youth club offers new opportunities and experiences for young people with the aim of inspiring them to believe in themselves, make the most of life and achieve their full potential.”

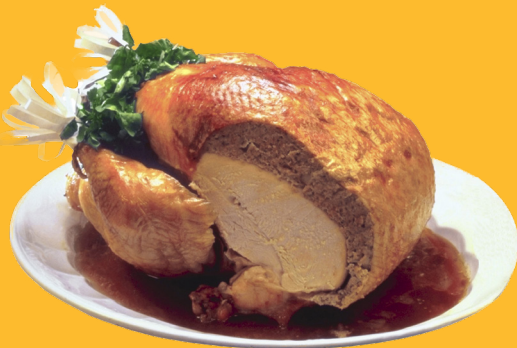
Open to 11-17-year-olds living in the B70 and B71 postcode areas, the club regularly attracts around 20 youngsters to each of its weekly gatherings.

It meets every Tuesday from 4.30pm to 6.30pm at the Church of the Good Shepherd with St John, as well as organising at least two activities and one trip per month.

## Keeping harmony over Christmas

With the Christmas festivities soon to be in full swing, here’s a gentle reminder of how to make sure we can all have a happy holiday season.

- **DON’T** put fat or cooking oil down the drains. Even very hot oil will solidify when it hits the cold drainage pipe and cause a blockage. **If we need to call an engineer to clear this type of blockage, we have to charge you.**
- **DON’T** leave bulky rubbish in the bin stores. You can take it to the Sandwell tip in Oldbury or call **0121 569 6625** to get the council to collect it.
- **DO** remember to speak to your neighbours if you’re planning a party or any event that might cause a noise issue. Most neighbours will be far more accepting of a one-off disturbance if you show them the consideration of letting them know in advance.



## Useful numbers

Here’s a few handy numbers to keep by you over the holiday period.

- **NHS – 111**
- **Severn Trent (emergency sewerage or drain problems) – 0800 783 4444**
- **Environment Agency incident hotline – 0800 80 70 60**
- **National Gas emergency service – 0800 111 999**
- **Emergency highways issues – 07867 506556 *Only for outside normal council office hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-5.30pm)***
- **Emergency street cleaning – 07889 117913 *Only for outside normal council office hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-5.30pm)***
- **Emergency social services – 0121 569 2355 *Only in an emergency for children’s or adult social care advice***



Knowing your household’s average water usage helps you keep an eye on costs and spot any leaks or other problems you may be responsible for getting fixed.

The ‘Waterwise’ table below, compiled by the Consumer Council for Water, will help you compare your usage against the average amount used by a similar sized household.

To calculate your usage:

- look at page 2 of your water bill, in the right-hand column, to see the volume of water (in cubic metres) you used in the last six months
- double that figure to get the amount for the year.

AVERAGE ANNUAL WATER USAGE (IN CUBIC METRES)			
Number of people living at home	Low	Average	High
1	45	66	100
2	55	110	136
3	82	136	175
4	110	165	210
5	136	182	245
6	155	200	265