



Newsletter covering
Aberdeen City,
Aberdeenshire
and Moray.

Castlehill

Connects

issue 36 Summer 2026



Wishing Castlehill CEO David Lappin a Very Happy Retirement

Our CEO for the last
16 years is retiring

read his farewell message on page 3

In this edition we are **connecting** with –
Queen Elizabeth Court in Fettercairn,
Cromar Court in Tarland and
St John's Court in Stonehaven

see page 6

And much more...

grab a coffee and **connect** with your community!

Sign up to



by **30 JUNE** and you'll be
entered into our prize draw to

**win one of three
£100 vouchers!**

see page 7 to
learn more

Management Committee David Lappin is retiring

Castlehill is set to undergo some significant changes as we announce the retirement of our CEO David Lappin.

David has been CEO for the last 16 years making significant contributions to the way we work and has been responsible for leading us through the pandemic.

John Black Convenor on behalf of the Management Committee says:

"I wish David a retirement as fulfilling as the career he is leaving behind. Having spent years investing in our success, now it's time to focus on his own relaxation. So, no more deadlines, emails and meetings – just a calendar which provides endless opportunities. Enjoy all adventures!"

David will be succeeded by Isla Gray.

Newsletter covering Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

It also lets us show some of the community activities, achievements, special birthdays and celebrations that our tenants enjoy in the Castlehill wider community. In this edition we are **connecting** with –

Queen, Elizabeth Court Fettercairn had entertainment from the Lindsay School of Dance

A beautiful seating area has been created at **Cromar Court, Tarland**

St John's Court, Stonehaven raised over £500 with a coffee morning, home bakes and a great raffle.

Go to page 6 for the photos and connect with our community.

What do you think of our new look?

We've recently refreshed the newsletter and would love your feedback. Is it easy to read? What would you like to see more of? We're especially keen to hear your ideas for future articles or topics.

Share your thoughts for a chance to win a £50 voucher in our prize draw.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CastlehillConnectsSummer2026>

If you are not online, you can send your suggestions to our office. Please remember to include your name and address

Castlehill Housing Association | 4 Carden Place, Aberdeen AB10 1UT | Tel: 01224 625822 | Website: www.castlehillha.co.uk

Please do not call direct dial numbers, staff work varying hours Monday to Friday and if on holiday may not be able access their voicemail for some time. If in doubt, please call reception or email info@castlehillha.co.uk.



Farewell message from David Lappin our CEO



David our CEO is a keen cyclist and has raised lots of money doing long distance cycling for various charities. To “celebrate” his Birthday a couple years back David did a 100-mile cycle event, **Ride the North**, around the back roads of Angus to fundraise for Charlie House.

He has plans for more cycling adventures in his retirement.



This will be my last contribution to the newsletter, as I am retiring from Castlehill at the end of June. It has been a privilege to work for the Association for more than 30 years, the last 16 years leading our organisation in the role of Chief Executive.

During that time, perhaps the only constant has been change. When I joined Castlehill, we had 700 properties and we now own and manage over 2,000 homes. Everything used to be done “on paper” – no laptops, smartphones or even emails. Staff in what was then sheltered housing, were fully funded by the Social Work department – those were the days! Technology advances have helped us adapt and modernise the services we provide, and we have changed with the times to recognise challenges, address them, and keep Castlehill moving forward.

Whilst in some ways the organisation is unrecognisable from the one I joined, I would like to think that, fundamentally, we’re still here to achieve the same aims – to provide safe, secure, well-maintained homes and good services for our tenants. Keeping homes affordable remains central but increasingly challenging with rising costs from suppliers and

expanding regulatory requirements that we must meet.

During my tenure, Castlehill has been fortunate to have had many committed volunteers on our Management Committee, including a good number of Castlehill tenants. Unfortunately, we don’t have any tenants on the Committee at present and this is something we would like to change. If you are interested in finding out about what’s involved, please get in contact with us.

Housing is one of the most important issues facing the country, with increasing homelessness, financial pressures and a shortage of genuinely affordable homes. In this context, organisations like Castlehill have a vital role, and I am sure that the Association will continue to grow and further develop our services in years to come.

Our new Chief Executive, Isla Gray, will be joining us in June and I wish her, all Castlehill staff, our voluntary Committee members and every Castlehill tenant great success in the future.

Best wishes to all,

David Lappin.

With Castlehill about to welcome a new CEO, we thought it would be a terrific opportunity to reflect upon the achievements the Association has had in recent years.

We have made many changes to the Association throughout David Lappin’s tenure as Chief Executive, especially during the pandemic when so much changed for everyone.

Sheltered Housing transition to Independent Living schemes

When our local councils announced that they were going to withdraw the funding for Sheltered Housing, we embraced the opportunity to provide our tenants with a housing service that continued to meet their needs.

Formal consultations with all tenants living in Sheltered schemes were held, explaining how the ending of housing support funding would affect their tenancy. Overwhelmingly tenants told us that keeping a service for older people with onsite staff presence was a priority. This resulted in the creation of the Independent Living service which was then successfully delivered across all three local authority areas. As people are living longer and are healthier for longer, most did not want the level of management previously offered.

Following a consultation, we were told that a service for older people with onsite staff presence, was a priority. We delivered this project over a period of a year.

We have had a few questions about how the **cost of the independent living service is calculated.**

In your annual rent letter service charges are clearly set out. The service charge for Independent Living is based on the actual costs of the previous year from 1st October to 30th September. The charge covers staffing costs, IT costs, health and safety.

The transition to Independent Living has been welcomed, it offers tenants more autonomy along with the benefit of the contact of having staff based onsite.

My Home – tenant portal



The theme of autonomy for tenants continued with the introduction of My Home. The pandemic showed us that we needed to improve our digital offering to tenants and give them more ways to manage their tenancies. My Home was launched over time with all tenants being invited to register in December 2025; already 25% of our tenancies have signed up, with people finding it 'easy to use' and 'helpful way of accessing important documents.'

The portal gives you the ability to pay your rent, report repairs and keep your tenancy up to date, as well as registering household and contact detail changes, accessing documents which are linked to your account and requesting your Property Services Officer or Housing Officer get in touch with you.

First time registering for the portal is simple, it will require your name, date of birth, postcode and email address and you will need your tenancy number.

Once registered you will only need your name and password to log in. It is also possible for a family member or friend to register on your behalf and help you manage your tenancy.

If you need any help with registration, please contact the office team and they will be only too happy to talk you through the process.

Why don't you give it a try?

Website relaunch

It is important to Castlehill that our tenants, their families and future tenants and their families have easy access to information about our properties and how we manage them. It is important that we make accessing information quick and simple over a variety of devices.

We have launched our new refreshed website this month.



THESE HOMES

Affordable Rented Housing Across Scotland

These Homes

Joining with other housing providers in the region Castlehill advertises available properties via the These Homes platform. It is simple to register on this choice-based site and allows prospective tenants choose where they want to live and in what type of property and then they can apply for what is available from a variety of landlords.



Digital Switchover project

The change from analogue copper wire systems to a fully digital was required when the telecom providers advised that the old systems would become

obsolete and the Scottish Government set a target of 2026 to complete the upgrades.

This required a lot of work at schemes, upgrading door entry systems, lifts, fire systems and security to come in line with the new digital requirements. Analogue systems would no longer work when the switch over happened, and we wanted tenants to be safe.

The Association has successfully transitioned all of our schemes from analogue to digital communication systems, including door entry, lifts, security & fire panels. We are delighted to have been awarded top honours by the Digital Telecare for Scottish Local Government.

Digital Switchover feedback

Thank you to our Independent Living tenants who completed a short survey sharing their feedback on how the process went. We really appreciate everyone who took the time to respond.

Some of the positive feedback from tenants included:

"The CHA representatives explained everything regarding the switchover to my satisfaction."

"I felt safe and secure before the changes but appreciate the functional improvements (especially the door entry system) and aesthetic improvements (no more red cords)."

"Congratulations to CHA. Improvement much appreciated."

To achieve the Digitally Migrated milestone, a Telecare Service Provider must have reached 100% of telecare in digital mode with those connections linked to a digital Alarm Receiving Company (ARC).

David Lappin – our CEO – commented "This was a complex project with a tight timescale and the organisation and delivery efforts of everyone involved made it happen successfully. The award is well deserved recognition of those efforts and is much appreciated"

The team at Digital Telecare for Scottish Local Government, said,

"We extend our wholehearted congratulations to Castlehill Housing Association and look forward to continuing to work with them in the future as they use digital telecare as a catalyst to drive innovation in telecare service delivery."

High praise indeed!



"The work was non-obtrusive, and the workman was very respectful."

We are grateful for all feedback received. Your comments help us understand what worked well and where we can continue to improve our services in the future.

Carole (pictured) from Mackay Court, Rhynie was thrilled to be one of the Digital Switchover prize draw winners, with two other winners from Richmondhill Court in Aberdeen, and Foudland Court in Insch. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Heatcare rebrands to CARDO – We'd like to make tenants aware that our contractor Heatcare has rebranded as CARDO Scotland and is changing their look. Tenants should be aware of the new brand logo (below) on vans and correspondence. All numbers will remain the same but found under their new name.

We are changing our look.

Heatcare Oil and Gas Ltd are currently in the process of rebranding and are excited to share that our new name will be CARDO from 1st June 2026.

Please note that if your appointment is scheduled after 1st June 2026 your Operative will be completing works under the CARDO brand.

CARDO



Castlehill Connects communities

FETTERCAIRN – Queen Elizabeth Court

Queen Elizabeth Court had entertainment from the Lindsay School of Dance with their wonderful Highland dancers demonstrating their skills to our tenants who also benefited from a fine Christmas dinner with a fabulous Christmas raffle with prizes donated from local businesses.

It was a great day, and the tenants couldn't believe little Olivia Sayer from Aberdeen being the smallest Highland dancer. Once she overcame a little bit of stage fright, she went on to do an amazing performance.



STONEHAVEN – St John's digs deep for young Mum



Tenants at St John's Court held a coffee morning over the festive season, with home bakes and makes on sale along with a great raffle. They raised over £500 to support an individual with a young family who is struggling with serious medical issues. "We just wanted to help - it's so sad, her children are all under 7 years old and her husband is terrified of the future without her", Sue the co-ordinator at the scheme told us.

Well done, we're sure the funds were greatly appreciated.



TARLAND – Cromar Court update

A big thank you to a resident of Cromar Court in Tarland for sharing this fantastic photo capturing the transformation of a section of communal land into a welcoming patio area with planters.

With the groundwork now complete, residents are looking forward to bringing the space to life by filling the new planters with bright, colourful flowers. Cromar Court tenants also successfully applied to CaRTO for funding to provide new benches.

We hope this new outdoor area will be well enjoyed by everyone throughout the summer and become a lovely place to relax and connect with neighbours.

across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray

Have Your Say – Join CaRTO!

Getting involved in tenant participation is a great way to share your ideas and help shape the services you receive.

One of the best ways to do this is by joining CaRTO – Castlehill Registered Tenants Organisation.

CaRTO is an independent group, run by tenants for tenants. Working in partnership with Castlehill, it plays an important role in decision-making by sharing feedback, making recommendations and helping shape policies, procedures and publications.

You don't need any previous experience. All you need is to be a Castlehill tenant.

Interested? Why not come along to an online meeting or have a chat with a CaRTO member to find out more?

For more information, contact us via My Home, email info@castlehillha.co.uk or call 01224 625822.



Sign up for a chance to win a **£100 voucher**



Sign up by **30 June** and you'll be entered into our prize draw to win one of three **£100 vouchers**.

Already registered? You'll be included automatically.

Not registered yet? Signing up is quick and easy.

See page 5 to get started."



Remember to make use of Housing Perks

Higher prices for essentials are impacting everyone's available money. That's why Castlehill has decided to continue to offer savings with Housing Perks. This is free to Castlehill Tenants and gives access to discounts of up to 10% with over 100 brands and stores, helping save money with everyday spending.

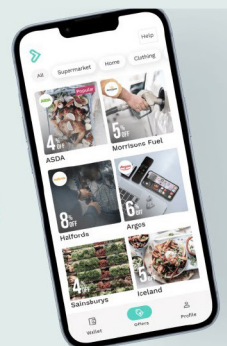
With some of your favourite brands and stores including Asda, Sainsburys, B&M, Argos, Primark, B&Q, Sports Direct and much more.

How to sign up – go to your app store and search **"Housing Perks"** – **Download** the app – Enter your **mobile phone number** – Select **Castlehill HA** from the list – Enter your **tenancy reference**. You'll find this on your rent statements.



HOUSING PERKS

SAVE MONEY ON ESSENTIALS



Grounds Maintenance Service April 2026–March 2028

Consultation was carried out with tenants in September 2025 as the current grounds maintenance contract was coming to an end on 31st March 2026. 3 options were provided to tenants to vote for on the level of service they wished to take forward for the renewal of the tender. The preferred option was to retain the level of service and frequency of visits that we previously had in place.

Two contractors have been appointed to cover the work from 1st April 2026 on an initial 2-year contract. There is an option to extend this contract by a further 2 years subject to satisfactory completion of the agreed works and requirements within the key performance indicators.

The contractors appointed and covering the areas are listed

below and tenants will have received letters advising them of their appointed contractor.

ABERDEEN CITY
– Nurture Landscapes Ltd
ABERDEENSHIRE NORTH
– Nurture Landscapes Ltd
ABERDEENSHIRE SOUTH
– Nurture Landscapes Ltd
ABERDEENSHIRE WEST
– Idverde Ltd
MORAY – Idverde Ltd

Castlehill have reviewed the specification documents to allow for a clearer understanding on the level and frequency of work for the contractor and the tenants. Below is an outline of the specification providing the level of service and frequency of work you should expect to see at your scheme from 1st April 2026.

1st of April to 31st October

(a visit every 2 weeks)

- **Grass** cut, collected and cuttings removed every 2 weeks (where applicable)
- **Litter** picking, leaf removal and general path clearing every 2 weeks
- **Shrub** bed maintenance to keep areas clean and tidy every 4 weeks
- **Weed** treatment to required areas and removal every 6 to 8 weeks
- **Moss** treatment to paths and hard standing areas a minimum of 4 times per year
- **Pruning** of shrubs and trees limited to only where they are overhanging paths, windows and roads to allow 150mm clearance and 1m clearance from the building where possible
- **Cultivation** of shrub beds once during summer schedule

1st of November to 31st of March

(a visit once per month)

- **Pruning** of relevant full shrub bed to all areas
- **Trim** all growth hanging over boundaries within tendered area
- **Grit bin** checks / top ups
- **Collection** and removal of moss, weeds, litter, debris and leaves from all areas
- **Bin** stores and car parks cleared of litter and debris
- **Cultivation** of shrub beds once during winter schedule
- **Tree survey** carried out annually and provide report to Castlehill



The appointed contractor will be providing Castlehill with a programme of works and where possible will be visiting the site on the same day of each scheduled visit during the summer schedule. This will be subject to change on occasions of poor weather and staff leave. Castlehill's Property Services Officers will be visiting the schemes regularly to monitor and record the work is being carried out in line with the specification and frequency required. Castlehill will also be holding monthly progress meetings with the contractor to address and rectify any concerns that have been raised by tenants or Castlehill staff.