



Newsletter covering
Aberdeen City,
Aberdeenshire
and Moray.

Castlehill Connects

issue 35 ❄️ Winter 2025



Our biggest digital offering

– our tenant portal – **My Home**

for a step by step guide
to logging in and to find
out more, see page 3

7 Easy Energy-Saving ❄️ Tips to Keep Costs Down this winter

Small changes to help reduce bills,
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And much more...
grab a coffee and **connect**
with your community!

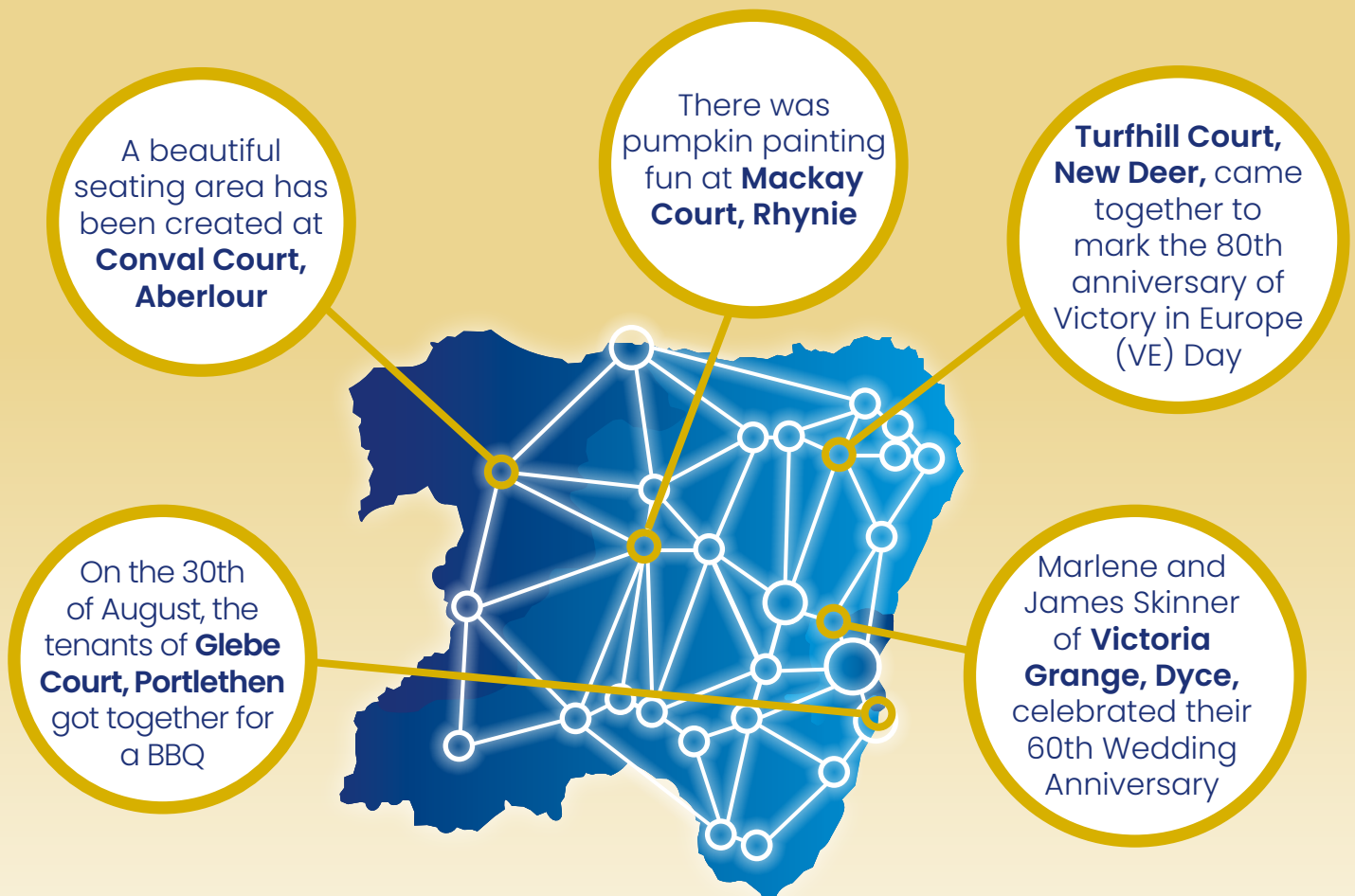
Welcome to your new look newsletter

You may not know but all social landlords are **required** to publish information for tenants to keep them updated. We use our newsletter to let you know about changes to the organisation's policies and procedures, advise of information which may help

with your tenancy and signpost to external organisations. We also have a new name, **Castlehill Connects**, which was voted for by tenants, with a lucky winner from Ellon claiming the £50 voucher prize draw. Thank you to everyone who took part.

The newsletter covers **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 -



Go to pages 4 and 5 for the photos and connect with our community. Share your Castlehill experiences with us, email info@castlehillha.co.uk.

To be in with a chance to **win a £50 Housing perks voucher**, Sign up to My Home and use the suggestions section to send us the message '**Castlehill Connects sent me**'

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.



Our tenant portal – **My Home**

This year has been a big year of digital change for the Association. We will be launching our new look website in January, giving it a bright new look, making it more user friendly and highlighting our biggest digital offering – our tenant portal – **My Home**.

My Home is going to give you a completely new way to manage your tenancy. It gives you access to all the information you will need to successfully manage a Castlehill tenancy. This easy-to-use online service provides tenants with access to key information, enabling them to see in real time important things like their rent and service charges, giving the ability to update tenancy information and report repairs and provide us with feedback.

The beauty of the system is that all you need is the internet. You can access from anywhere, your phone, iPad or tablet, home computer. You can nominate a next of kin or friend (proxy) to use the system.



Logging in for the first time

Lots of us can get a bit nervous using something new for the first time, but we are delighted to say that using My Home is designed to be very straightforward. It is as simple as setting up online banking, or shopping online.

Once registered you can log in and view your tenancy documents, view essential information about your home (e.g. when the next gas safety check is taking place, when the scheme walkabouts are scheduled), report issues or repairs to our Property Services Team.

Paying your rent

One of the main benefits about My Home is that it gives tenants a perfect way of viewing their rent costs and service charges. You can easily see when the payments are due, make note of issues with payments, and gives the opportunity to stay on top of your rent account to pay quickly and securely using WorldPay or ALLPAY.

It is so easy to notice if you are in credit or in arrears with the My Account changing colour (green for all paid up and red for arrears) clearly indicating if your account is needing attention.

Available in the account section of My Home is the ability to see a rent statement which shows all charges and payments in one easy place. This will also show the cost for services and additional payments so you will always have the correct information of the cost of a Castlehill tenancy.

My House

This section of MyHome is where you can request repairs or check on the progress of one. It also shows the History of all the repairs done at your property.

Documents

Documents section has any documents sent to you throughout your tenancy. It is an easy place to keep all these important documents. It is also an area of MyHome where you can contact CHA, with a straightforward way of seeing that your request has been picked up and is being dealt with.

A screenshot of the 'Register' form on the My Home portal. The form includes fields for 'I am a...' (Tenant or Owner), 'Your tenant number', 'Your surname', 'Your date of birth' (with day, month, and year dropdowns), 'Your postcode', and 'Your email address'. There is a 'Register' button at the bottom, and a link for 'Already have an account? Log in'.

You only register **once**. To do this you will need your **tenancy number** (which is on your tenancy agreement – or you can contact the office or your Housing Officer to request it). Once registered you will require your **email address** and the **password** you have created.

My Home also gives an option for friends or family members who may help you conduct day to day tasks for your tenancy – this is particularly useful for our older tenants who may be wary about the internet

New Deer tenants celebrate VE Day

Tenants, families, and friends of Turfhill Court came together to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day with an afternoon tea at their independent living scheme in New Deer. To honour the occasion, tenants created a beautifully decorated window display.

They try and have a special tea for all major national events e.g. The Queens' Diamond Jubilee, so they can all celebrate the occasion as a community.



Community benefit funding available

Castlehill holds a community benefit fund. This fund arises on a contractual obligation on our key contractors, based on the value of their contract.

This fund can be used to improve the communal areas of our schemes in ways which benefit our tenants. Raised beds, garden tidy ups, new seating have all been financed by this fund and we are delighted that work has taken place in several of our schemes.

Since the summer, a beautiful seating area has been made at Conval Court, which makes for a comfortable area to catch

up with neighbours. In the same scheme extra gardening works has been conducted to transform an overgrown area. Similarly, work has been undertaken at Cromar Court to transform the overgrown centre of the scheme transforming it into a more aesthetically pleasing area for tenants to enjoy.

Dalvenie Gardens staff approached the association to contribute towards the party they are organising to celebrate 25 years since the building was opened. The bench was unveiled to tenants at the 25th anniversary party

that took place in September.

Should a scheme have an area which may benefit from this fund, we would encourage them to contact their Property Services Officer or Housing Officer, and we can put their ideas to the Senior Management Team and if approved, fund their project.

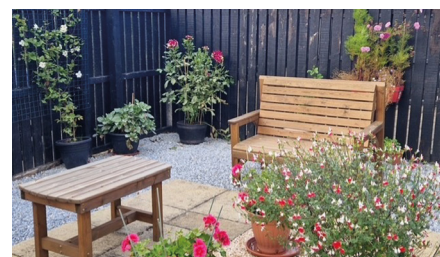


Photo of transformed garden area at Conval Court garden furniture funded by CaRTO)



60th wedding anniversary

Many congratulations to our tenants Marlene and James Skinner of Victoria Grange who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. This lovely picture was taken at their diamond anniversary celebrations at the scheme.

Pumpkin painting

Our Independent Living tenants are often invited to do fun things in the common rooms. Scheme co-ordinators and outside organisations can come and entertain or arrange such activities and we are incredibly grateful for their input and ideas. Here are photos of pumpkin painting fun at Mackay court, featuring our tenants Charlie and Carole and scheme coordinator Emma.

Charlie has lived at Mackay Court for 20 years and is always keen to join in any social events.



across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray

Remembering Billy McLeod – from Craigievar Court

Craigievar Court hasn't been quite the same since we lost our dear friend and neighbour, Billy McLeod, last year. Billy was one of those rare folk who made every day brighter. Always cheerful and up for a laugh, he'd go out of his way to help anyone – and everyone loved him for it.

Billy was a familiar sight on his mobility scooter, zipping off to Asda or Sainsbury's to pick up "the usual" for tenants. He always came back with shopping, bargains, and treats – no one escaped without a sweet or two! He took

great pride in tending the garden, feeding the birds, and keeping an eye on the place, often checking doors and fixing things without being asked.

Even as his health declined, Billy's spirit never wavered. He stayed active, determined, and kind-hearted to the end. His warmth, humour, and generosity touched everyone around him. Billy is sorely missed, but his kindness and community spirit will always be remembered by all of us at Craigievar Court.



Summer fun – BBQs

We heard from several of our schemes showing that our tenant community loves to gather for fun activities in our independent living schemes.



During the summer, the tenants, and their families at QEC had a BBQ! It was an enjoyable day with tasty food and lots of laughs. Ron and Fergus cooked the food and with the help of community volunteers Tyler and Gladys we had a highly successful day! Only thing was it was far too hot to sit outside for our tenants, so they were all happy to sit inside with their food and the fans going!



BBQ to mark changes at Glebe Court

On the 30th of August, the tenants of Glebe Court got together for a lovely BBQ in our garden. It marked the end of the collaboration of Castlehill and Aberdeenshire Council tenants sharing the same facilities. With the A2D changeover, Aberdeenshire now take over their twelve cottages at Glebe Court. So, invites were sent to all tenants to join in for a lovely get together. Unfortunately, not all tenants could make it, but we had fun anyway. Thanks to Libby Bligh for collecting so many donations towards the food and for cooking the delicious meat.



Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Every three years the Scottish Housing regulator requires us to contact our tenants to ask how satisfied you are with the services CHA provides. Research Resource undertook the survey this year throughout October and November which will give us updated insight into our tenants' views on the services they receive.

This year the majority were sent out by email and are delighted with the response rate so far.

There is still time for tenants to get involved, so if you have not returned your questionnaire please do so. It is a fantastic opportunity to let Castlehill know where we can improve. It also really helps us if we know where we are doing well.

Our results will show how we are doing compared with other Registered Social Landlords in Scotland. This document will be available on the website and My Home portal.



Castlehill Management Committee

Castlehill is managed by a Management Committee who bring a range of skills and experience that contribute to the sound governance of the Association. At our most recent Annual General Meeting one of our long-standing committee members, Gordon Kyle, stood down after giving many years of service. We would like to commend Gordon who has been part of Castlehill since 1983 when he was appointed as the Association's first Director.

Gordon's knowledge and expertise will be missed but we wish him the best in his retirement and are incredibly grateful for his contribution.

We are always keen to have Castlehill tenants on the Committee and if this is something that would be of interest to you, please get in touch.

New Property Services Officer and Housing Officer – staffing changes

We are delighted to welcome Euan Robertson to the role of Property Service Officer. Euan brings over twenty years of knowledge to his role and is really looking forward to getting stuck into his role.



We also welcomed an old face back to a permanent role – Joshua Miller has returned as Housing Officer and we are thrilled to have him back, bringing his skills back to Castlehill.



Community Alarm

Decommissioning of analogue systems that has taken place at your scheme means that Castlehill will no longer be offering Community Alarm as a service. Should you wish to continue with Community Alarm you will be able to get a Digital Community Alarm from the local authority.

Your local authority provides a Digital Community Alarm service. You can apply for this service directly and pay for the local authority direct for the service.

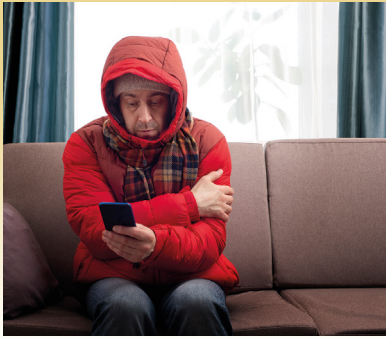
January Direct Debits

If you pay your rent by direct debit, please note that your payment will come out of your bank account on the 2nd of January 2026, instead of the usual 1st of the month. This is due to the banks being closed on the 1st of January.

Please ensure that you have money in your account to allow your rent to be paid on the 2nd of January 2026.



Money advice over winter



We are aware that winter is one of the most expensive times of the year for all of us, the weather turns, heating costs go up and then there is the expense of Christmas.

There are plenty of organisations across the region who can help with money advice. It is important to make sure that if you are claiming benefits, you are getting the benefits to which

you are entitled. Colleagues in Care and Repair can help over fifty-fives with benefit advice and we have our Key Project colleagues who can advise those referred to them on such matters.

Our friends at various organisations are also more than adept at making sure you are getting appropriate help.

The financial inclusion team – [Aberdeen City Council](#) operate out of Marischal College and ensure that everyone has access to advice, advocacy, information and representation in relation to benefits and tax credits.

Aberdeenshire Council has a similar system as does Moray Council, both have teams who can offer help and they can be contacted via these councils Financial services pages.

SCARF can help you with a range of services which can help you live warmer and reduce fuel bills. You can contact them [via their website](#).

Tenants can also make significant savings during the festive period (and indeed during the entire year) using the Housing Perks app. The app gives tenants great discounts at various goods and services. If you have not downloaded the app, we would encourage you to.

Thinking of Moving?

Why not try the House Exchange!

Whether you need more space, need less space, want to be closer to family, or just fancy a change, House Exchange is Castlehill's go-to service for mutual exchanges, it is completely free to use.

Just visit www.houseexchange.org.uk, pop in your details, and the system will match you with others across the UK who are also looking to move.

The process is quite simple using the platforms toolkit:

- Download the app from Apple or Android store
- Write a description of your property using their easy tools
- Add photos it helps make your listing stand out
- Start messaging and arranging viewings once you are matched

It is a terrific way to explore new options, you should contact your Housing Officer before starting this process and House Exchange can guide you every step of the process.

Why not take a look today and see where your next home could be?



Aberdeen Care & Repair can help anyone over the age of 60 or anyone living with a long-term health condition including disabled children. No repair is too small.

Our number is 01224 625822 (option 1) if you require assistance with any of the services below. We cover Aberdeen City and some areas of Aberdeenshire.

Please get in touch to check.

- Decorating – internal & external
- Hanging pictures/ mirrors/shelves
- Curtain rails/blinds
- Putting TVs on the wall
- Minor works – plumbing, electrical, joinery
- Fitting electric cookers/ washing machines
- Moving furniture within the home/turning mattresses
- Building flat pack furniture
- Grab rails & key-safes
- Ramps/external handrails
- Level access showers
- Other handyman jobs
- Recommending local repair companies
- Financial assistance for some repairs
- Benefit checks
- Blue badge applications

'Tis the season for...

Condensation could lead to mould and mildew.

It is important as the season changes, and the temperature drops that we remember that this is the time of year when condensation usually starts as the warmer air hits the colder surfaces and turns to water. Not properly dealing with this can lead to mould and mildew forming in your home.

Please remember that the Association is not responsible for damage caused by mould and mildew unless it is because of a building defect. Moisture in the air is the most common cause of this, and this cannot be helped. Opening a window and adequately heating your home can negate some of the moisture and there are plenty of excellent quality cleaners available which can sort the issue should it occur.

We also have useful information leaflet about Mould and Mildew which can be accessed on the website here. If you are worried about anything, please call your Property Services Officer and they should be able to advise you on the best course of action.



Using the Grit Bin

As winter approaches, and the temperatures drop, it makes sense for tenants to acquaint themselves with where their scheme Grit bins are located.

If there are grit bins within the boundary of the scheme, they are topped up by the Association, if they are out

with the boundary and next to the public road the Local Authority usually maintains them. When our staff are at the development we will check to see if the grit bins within the development need topped up and arrange for this to be done. In periods of prolonged bad weather grit will be needed more frequently, so if you notice the grit supplies are running low please contact us and we will arrange for a delivery.



7 Easy Energy-Saving Tips to Keep Costs Down this winter

Did you know that minor changes can add up to substantial savings on your energy bills this winter? Small steps can have enormous impact and keep those bills in check this winter.

Here are some tried-and-tested tips to help you stay cosy while keeping costs under control:

- **Switch off at the socket**

Appliances left on standby still use energy. By turning them off at the wall, you could save around £70 a year. A quick flick of the switch really does make a difference.

- **Keep the heat in**

Draft excluders and window film (available from most DIY shops) can help stop heat escaping. Or make your own draft excluder for the bottom of your doors – simple, cheap, and effective.

- **Light up smarter**

LED bulbs are now the standard choice. They are super-efficient, last longer than traditional bulbs, and can save you around £55 a year on your electricity bill.

- **Cooler washes equal savings**

Washing at 30°C instead of 40°C means you will use less energy without sacrificing clean clothes. That is three washes for the price of two in energy terms.

- **Dry naturally**

Tumble dryers are handy but expensive to run. Drying clothes outside when possible, or indoors on a clothes horse (with a window slightly open to avoid damp), will save you money and protect your home from condensation.

- **Close curtains and blinds at night**

It is a simple step, but closing curtains and blinds helps trap heat inside and reduces heating costs. Think of it as giving your home an extra blanket.

- **Track your energy use with a smart meter**

Smart meters are free from most suppliers and give you a clear view of what you are spending in real time. They are brilliant for spotting where you can cut back. If you would like advice, Care and Repair can help – just give them a call.

Christmas & New Year office closure

Our office will close on Dec 24th at 12pm and reopen on January 5th at 9am

Opening hours are Monday – Thursday 9 – 5 pm Friday 9 – 4 pm

Emergency repairs

Out of Office times, our emergency repairs service operates. Please phone the main office number **01224 625822** for our emergency call-out details.

- For gas heating: Heatcare Oil & Gas **01343 842 042**

- For central plant/air-source heating: Heat Care Oil & Gas **01343 842042**

- For other emergencies (floods, leaks, loss of power, etc.): Camwater **01651 872929**

If you live in sheltered or very sheltered housing, please report any repairs to scheme staff as usual.

The Management, Castlehill Committee and team wish you happy Christmas and a fantastic 2026.