

Digital champions log on at Edinburgh Housing Development

An Edinburgh housing development has been given iPads to keep elderly customers connected with loved ones all the way through the pandemic, thanks to an initiative by The Scottish Government.

Castlebrae Glebe, which is run and operated by [Bield](#), received 12 iPads from [Connecting Scotland](#) which is a project established in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to connect individuals who may have otherwise been isolated.

The programme has kept individuals across the country connected virtually when it has not been possible to meet in person and has also supported digital skill development.

Sharon Tomany, Development Manager at Castlebrae Glebe in Craigmillar applied for the programme in February after hearing about the initiative designed for individuals who don't have the confidence, kit or connectivity at home in a bid to reduce digital exclusion.

She added: "The project has been an amazing opportunity to help customers become more digitally connected and keep in contact with loved ones throughout a period which could have been extremely isolating.

"Everyone at the development has benefited from the donation in some way. One aspect that we didn't appreciate would have such a big impact was that our customers now feel closer to

the local community.

“Previously they may not have seen the communication from local businesses online or been able to get involved with local groups activities.

“The iPads have enabled customers to listen to music, watch videos, read the news and shop online – simple things that they didn’t necessarily have access to before.”

Customers have been supported by staff to set the iPads up and understand how to use the device safely.

Sharon added: “The feedback from friends and families has been very positive and many have expressed their delight about being able to get in touch with their loved ones at any point and actually have video calls, which is much better than talking over the phone.

“We know that many elderly people often battle loneliness and this has heightened throughout the pandemic, so it is especially rewarding to know that we have changed that for our customers by even just a little bit.”

Bield use technology to deliver a wide range of specialised housing and care services for around 20,000 older people across 23 local authority areas and is working towards becoming the first fully digitally connected housing association in Scotland.

Bield’s new strategy for property development provides housing solutions – with greater choice and flexibility – to address the needs of the current generation of older people and the next.

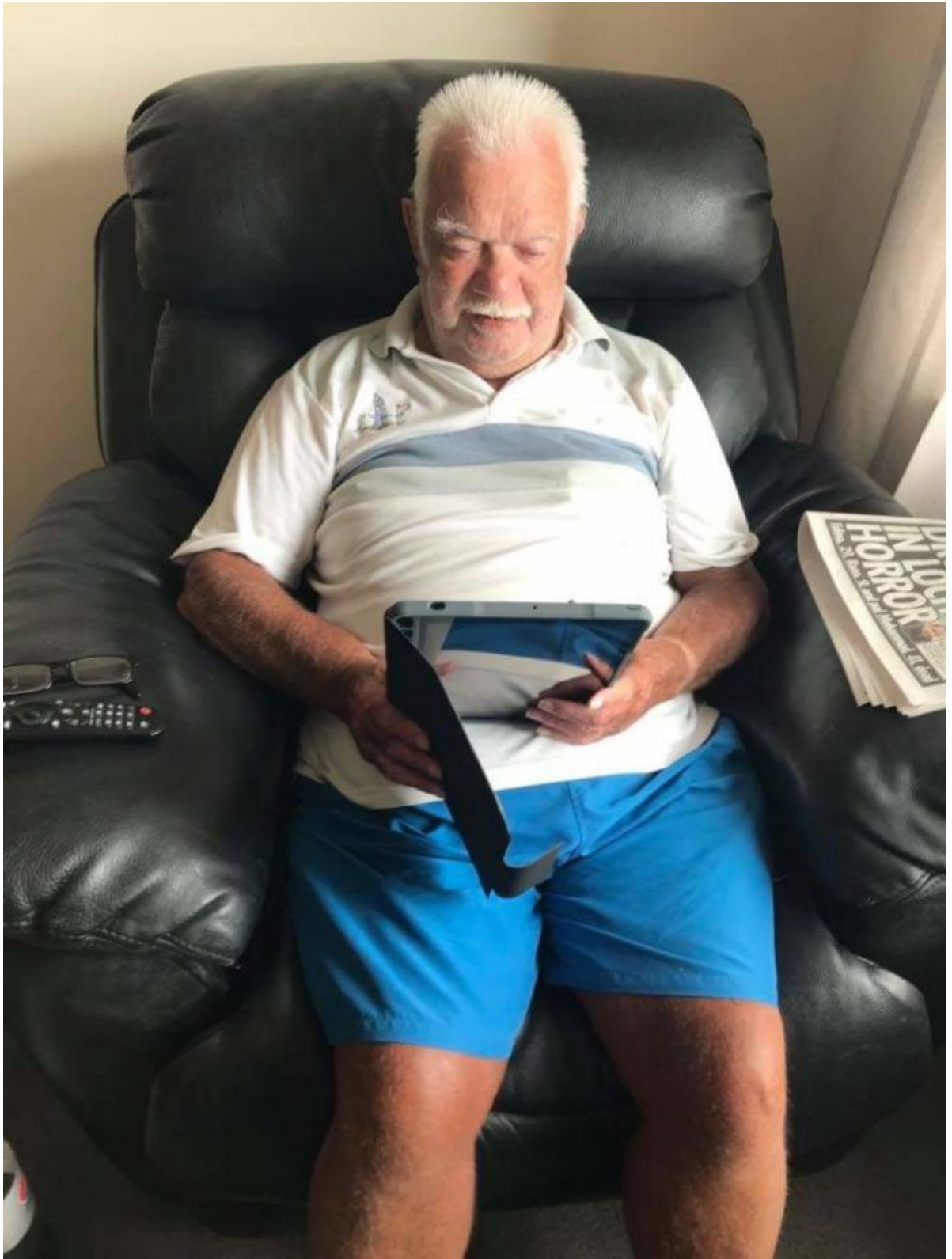
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