



Secretary: Simon Gowen  
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## Report 2023-24

Each year the Fairstead Trust has about £1000 to allocate for the general benefit of the inhabitants of Botesdale or for the benefit of Botesdale residents who may be in need.

In July/August and December 2023 the trust provided support in the form of food vouchers to the value of £500 and £300 purchased from the COOP to one Botesdale resident experiencing hardship.

Applications for assistance can be made by informal approaches to any of the Trustees or by writing to the Secretary. Requests can be submitted at any time and decisions are made by the Trustees through email communication. All such requests are treated in confidence.

In the autumn of 2023, the position of Chairman of the Trust became vacant upon the departure of Rev. Chris Norburn. This vacancy has been filled by Andy Edwards, the Chairman of Botesdale Parish Council. The other trustees are Tim Holt-Wilson, Philip Miles (Treasurer), Peter Beck, Lottie Clements and Simon Gowen (Secretary).

Historical Note: newcomers to the village (and some established residents) might be interested in the origin of the Fairstead Trust which I originally summarised in my 2022/23 report.

In February 1818 a triangular piece of land known as Botesdale Green at Back Hills was enclosed by Act of Parliament. Hitherto, the land had been accessible to commoners for grazing livestock and for subsistence gathering of turf and firewood. As an indemnity against the loss of this communal resource a charity was established to manage the proceeds from the commercial letting of this land. Originally registered as "The Back Hills Allotments" this charity has subsequently been renamed the "Fairstead Trust" which manages the investments acquired when the communally owned land including the Fairstead was sold for housing development in the 1970s.

Simon Gowen  
March 2024