

Caroline Dinenage

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Your local MP reporting back from Westminster



MP for Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head

It's hard to believe another year has flown by! With Christmas just around the corner, here's an early update of what I've been up to.

There've been many causes for celebration in Gosport this month. I had the honour of presenting prizes at the Gosport Business Celebration to extremely deserving companies who are contributing a huge amount to our area.

Volunteers also contribute immensely to our community. I presented awards to the 'Be your own kind of beautiful' mentors, who promote confidence and aspiration among school girls. Their work helps Gosport's girls to believe in themselves.

The Gosport Sea Cadets is another great local organisation. At their awards ceremony I was struck by the enthusiasm of the cadets and the dedication of their leaders in providing an exciting learning experience. Then there was just time to pop along to Gosport FC for the charity fundraiser for the Harbour Cancer Support Centre before I called it a day!

It's always a pleasure to see areas where local authorities are combining resources to provide better and more efficient services. I was certainly impressed on my visit to the CCTV centre, which helps keep the residents of both Gosport and Fareham safe.

Sadly, all the brilliant business and voluntary work in Gosport doesn't mean there aren't any challenges. I held a very constructive meeting with the Gosport Deanery and Chapter to discuss the difficulties their parishioners and the wider community face and how I can help.



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Hopefully one thing that has helped my hard-pressed constituents was the Energy Surgery I hosted. Around 40 people came along to get specialist advice from energy groups on how to cut their bills this winter. We've still got lots of information to hand, so do get in touch if you missed it.

I also hit a milestone this month, with my trips to Grange Infants School, Holbrook Primary School and Lee Junior School meaning I've now visited all 41 schools in my constituency. Along the way I've been consistently impressed by the overall standard, and I'm committed to helping all our schools to flourish even more. Back in Westminster, the tables were turned when Elson Junior School popped in for a visit and a Q&A session.

Parliament has been as busy as ever this month, as I upped my campaign to gain a medal for the Arctic Convoys veterans. Regular readers will know that I've long fought for these brave men to be honoured, and I held a debate in Westminster Hall to urge the Government to take action, with a number of veterans in attendance. I was disappointed with the Minister's response, and will continue to campaign to ensure the new review finally delivers the medal these men so greatly deserve.

The veterans' bravery came to mind when I hosted a meeting on the threat of Somali piracy to our modern day seafarers. The discussion, with Foreign Office Minister Henry Bellingham and the Chamber of Shipping, highlighted the work that still needs to be done to protect those who brave our oceans today.

We also heard this month the news that women will be able to serve onboard RN submarines. I questioned the Defence Minister who confirmed that women will be able to apply for all roles onboard. I also secured a key announcement from Home Office Minister Lynne Featherstone on forced marriage, when she confirmed the Government would launch a consultation into criminalising forced marriage. Finally, I took part in a debate on apprenticeship and was proud to explain that we have over 1600 apprentices in the Gosport area.

With the Christmas spirit very much in the air, it was great to get back to the constituency for the switch on of the Stubbington Christmas lights. Nothing else puts me quite so much in the festive mood, so all that remains is to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Best wishes,

Caroline



GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me on any issue, or to find out when my next surgery is. It is also possible to come up to Parliament to have an official tour. I'm always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben for my constituents. Just please contact my office to book at least two months in advance to make sure you get a place - the tours are very popular!

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