

Caroline Dinenage

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Your local MP reporting back from Westminster



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

This month we heard the great news that the UK economy is on the road to recovery. It's a picture reflected in Gosport, where our own regeneration plans are really starting to gather momentum.

Our new Town Team, which was formed from Gosport businesses, organisations and individuals in July, has been steaming ahead with its great ideas to rejuvenate the High Street. I met with the Council's Town Team coordinators, Lynda and Siobhan, to hear about the group's fantastic work and celebrate its prestigious new status as an official Town Team Partner. That'll add an extra £10,000 to the £100,000 already promised by the Government to boost our High Street's prospects.

Our local businesses got a great new addition this month, with the official opening of Blitz Photography on Stoke Road. I went along to meet their new apprentice and cut the cake! We also heard the news that Gosport's Ice Rink is set to be revamped. This is a fantastic development that will tie in with the regeneration of the whole area.

There's been encouraging news across the constituency this month. With national crime levels down by 3% this year, I met with Gosport's Chief Inspector Jason Kenny to see how we're doing. I was delighted to hear that our local police have done even better by achieving a whopping 9% reduction. The standard of our area's police was also demonstrated by Stubbington officer PC Alex Stypulkowski. He's been presented with a national police bravery award for helping his colleague to make an arrest, despite being badly injured.

My meeting with Hampshire County Council's Education team this month was also very positive. In addition to a constructive discussion on topics ranging from school places to Sure Start, I heard all about plans for £12million in additional funding for our area including at St Vincent's and Siskin. I'm also delighted that 3 very talented students from Crofton School triumphed in their category in the national Film the House film-making competition in Parliament. It's a great achievement that reflects the breadth of ability in our local schools.

I held another useful meeting at Gosport's Discovery Centre, where I hold a regular surgery. The staff also briefed me and the Mayor on their news including plans for the Post Office to be re-housed there. Finally, there was just time to go along to the Gosport in Bloom ceremony, with the awards for our area's most green fingered presented by none other than my own dad (Fred).



At Blitz Photography—photo courtesy of Steve Reid



With Gosport's Mayor for a meeting with Discovery Centre staff

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Regular readers will know my commitment to standing up for members of our Armed Forces, whether serving or retired. That's why I jumped at the chance to have a meeting with the newly appointed Defence Minister, Mark Francois. I was pleased to be able to raise a number of pressing issues, ranging from war widows' pensions to the future of Headley Court, at this early stage. I also stressed once again the need for action on the Arctic Convoys case, and welcomed an announcement in Parliament that concrete proposals would be finalised by the end of the year.

Indeed, the sacrifice that the Arctic Convoy veterans made for Russia as well as Britain was brought to mind this month, as I headed to Moscow with NATO. It was certainly an eye-opening trip, with my committee on

Future Security and Defence Capabilities touring some key Russian diplomatic & military sights and meeting a number of politicians including the Deputy PM.

Back in the UK, which was sadly not noticeably warmer than Russia, I continued my support for sport in Parliament. At an inspiring meeting on Women's Sport & Fitness we heard from speakers including Clare Balding and Olympic Gold medalist Katherine Grainger on how to build on the Olympic legacy and do more to help women engage in sport.

With women's health in mind, I was pleased to be able to support my constituent Margaret at the Breakthrough Breast Cancer Westminster Fly-In. We discussed what more MPs could do support the fight against breast cancer, which tragically affects so many women like Margaret each year. I also attended a very useful briefing on the forthcoming Children and Families Bill, to ensure that the needs of children with SEN and disabilities in my constituency have been fully considered.

It's been a busy month for Parliamentary Committees too, with my Science and Technology Committee holding a fascinating evidence session with the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor on subjects as diverse as badgers and homeopathy. Select Committees play a vital role in allowing MPs to scrutinise the work of the Government, which is why I decided to stand for election to the Business, Innovation and Skills SC this month. I was delighted to have been elected from a field of six nominees and I'm committed to put my business experience to use in promoting growth and skills.

Finally, at the end of the month, I went to HMS Excellent to chair a press conference with the family of Timmy McColl, the RN sailor who went missing in Dubai six months ago. My thoughts are with his family, as I continue to work with the Navy and Foreign & Commonwealth Office to ensure everything possible is being done to find him.

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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