

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

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January 2023 started in a slightly chilly fashion, joining fellow sea swimmers for the annual New Year's dip at GAFIRS lifeboat station. Alongside my youngest (and most retiring) son, who was dressed as a giant banana, it was a great way to kick off the New Year in a good cause. Later in the month, I [took the opportunity](#) to praise the

lifesaving services of both GAFIRS and our local National Coastwatch Stations in a Parliamentary debate on supporting independent lifeboats.



It's been a month of big announcements, and significant steps forward in Parliament. At the start of the month, the Culture Secretary, Michelle Donelan, announced that Channel 4 would remain in public ownership. [In an oral question](#), I raised its important role of growing the skills we need to future proof our world class creative industries. The Secretary of State

confirmed that as part of the package agreed with the government, Channel 4 will be doubling their investment in creative skills.

The long awaited [Online Safety Bill](#) finally passed Third Reading in the Commons, and now heads to Lords for its final stages. As a former DCMS Minister with responsibility for this world leading piece of legislation, its crucial protections for children from illegal content and online harms can't come soon enough.

In animal welfare news, the Hunting Trophy (Import Prohibition) Bill is making great progress. This Bill, supported by the government, to ban the import of hunting trophies, with the aim of helping to protect endangered species.

At the start of the month, I also spoke to the [League Against Cruel Sport's Leaguecast](#). We discussed the Hunting Act, and my work around animal welfare more broadly.

I also [spoke in a debate](#) around Arts Council England (ACE) investment decisions. I am really pleased that Hampshire Cultural Trust are to receive £500,000 of funding, going towards projects like Gosport Museum & Art Gallery (who have opened their first [fantastic exhibition](#) by the way!). I support the government goal of driving more investment in places outside of London, but this mustn't undermine existing cultural eco-systems.

Speaking of fantastic exhibitions, I also visited the Science Museum to meet with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and see their exhibition in the David Sainsbury Gallery, inspiring young people with the range of technical careers. You can find out more about their work [here](#).

January 27<sup>th</sup> marked Holocaust Memorial Day. I joined students from Bay House & Brune Park at a very poignant service in St Thomas the Apostle church, Elson. I also signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment in Parliament on behalf of the Gosport Constituency. We

should never forget that the Holocaust didn't start with guns and violence, but with prejudice, intolerance, and hateful words.



I invited the [Over the Wall](#) charity to Parliament to introduce them to other MPs. They offer free residential camps and online resources for children with health challenges or disabilities, as well as support for their families.



I also Chaired the inaugural meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Central South, which I have formed in partnership with Business South. This new group will bring together businesses and leaders from across our sub-region to work collaboratively on challenges and opportunities facing our area.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, gave a speech on the economy. It was reassuring to learn that since 2010, the UK has grown faster than France, Japan and Italy and since the Brexit referendum, about the same rate as Germany. Our private sector has grown 7.5% in the last year and last year more money was invested in the UK than ever before, since 2010 more than 1 million new businesses have been created.

Whilst inflation has risen, it is still lower than 14 EU countries, with the lowest unemployment for half a century.

When it comes to the innovation industries, like digital technology, we punch above our weight on the world stage. You can read the Chancellor's speech in full [here](#).

I know that some local people are worried about recently announced changes to GP provision in our area. Gosport Medical Centre is due to merge with the Willow Group on April 1, and Bury Road Surgery is currently consulting on closure. A virtual meeting regarding Bury Road is due to take place on February 8, and a drop in on February 9. You can find out more about this [here](#). You can read more about the Gosport Medical Centre proposals [here](#).

[I asked the Secretary of State](#) my concerns in Health & Social Care Questions. I am pleased that he has agreed to meeting with me and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board to find a resolution.

I've been talking about defence issues a great deal this month too. I met with the Commanding Officers of both HMS Collingwood & HMS Sultan, Captain Davey and Captain Deakin, to discuss the state of accommodation for sailors on their sites.

I also took these concerns to Parliament, where I met with Alex Chalk, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, and challenged Andrew Murrison, the Minister for Defence People, Veterans and Service Families in [Defence Questions](#). I have invited both of them to Gosport to see the challenges for themselves - watch this space!



I also met with Minister of State for Veterans Affairs, Johnny Mercer. Given that 12.5% of the Gosport population has served in the armed forces, the highest of any area in England & Wales, we had a lot to talk about. I pushed for improvements to the Veterans Agency, including a

dedicated MPs helpline, so that my team and I can better support my constituents.



And I dropped in on the great team at the Institute of Naval Medicine who provide specialist medical training & support for the Royal Navy.

Among the cutting edge facilities I visited were the Environmental Chamber, Survival Immersion Pool & Organic Compound Analysis lab.

I am sure you will be aware of the plans to re-open the Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) for foreign National offenders. I [held a drop-in event](#) for constituents this month with Home Office and Ministry of Justice officials. We had an exceptional turnout and I hope to host another event later in the year.

I visited Hornet Sailing Club to see the fantastic progress on restoring the old Police Barracks to their former glory. As a result of Historic England funding, this will shortly become the new home of the Army Sail Training, who are taking over the command of Joint Forces Adventurous Training on the site.

I led lessons at both Alverstoke Junior School and Newtown Primary School about my role as an MP and how the democratic process works. I always love engaging with the youngsters and hearing their opinions when they become 'honorary ladies and gentlemen' in our mock debates!

I acted as a judge at the Gosport Rotary 'Youth Speaks' event- where students from Bay House and Brune Park were in fine form, debating issues from space travel to feminism!

Many residents have been in touch regarding Bay House School's latest OFSTED report. I have met with GFMAT (the academy which runs both Bay House and Brune Park), Hampshire County Council and the South East Department of Education Director, Dame Kate Dethridge, and will be meeting with the Minister Nick Gibb shortly, to ensure there is a clear plan in place to get the school back on track. Bay House have set up a dedicated email for anyone with concerns - [ofstedreport@gfmat.org](mailto:ofstedreport@gfmat.org).



I met with Chief Operating Officer Chris Evans & Chief Nurse Liz Rix at Queen Alexandra Hospital. While staff at the hospital have been working really hard to virtually eliminate ambulance waits at A&E this month, we all know the site is not really fit for purpose any more. Some years ago I helped secure the £58.2 million to build a brand new Emergency Department, it's great that this huge construction project, which will vastly improve the experience for both patients and staff, is now finally underway.



I also met [Driving Miss Daisy](#) to learn more about their discharge service, in partnership with QA, offering much quicker and more bespoke support than traditional ambulance transport and already improving outcomes. They significantly reduce costs to the NHS, ensure that patients are discharged safely, and efficiently, and puts control into the hands of the hospital wards.

Toward the end of the month, the [government announced further](#)

[plans](#) to tackle ambulance and A&E waiting times. This includes £1 billion to increase capacity with 800 new ambulances and 5,000 more hospital beds. There will also be more measures to speed up discharge and share best practise.

The government also confirmed that Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board are to receive £6,153,000 to buy community beds to speed up discharge of patients. This will free up beds in the hospitals.

The Department of Health & Social Care also announced its priorities for the Women's Health Strategy. This is something that I championed in my Ministerial role at DHSC, and have campaigned for it ever since returning to the backbenches. Their priorities include expanding women's health hubs, better information sharing around women's health, and better access to IVF treatment and HRT.

#### **In other news:**

-The Prime Minister started the new year by outlining his 5 priorities: Halving inflation this year; Grow the economy; Reduce national debt; Reduce NHS waiting lists; Stop small boat crossings.

-Single fare bus journeys will be capped at £2 until March 31.

-Hampshire Constabulary has had a net increase in excess of 560 Officers patrolling the streets of Hampshire since 2019, and 16,573 nationwide. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, Donna Jones, has also pledged to reach 600 Officers by March 31 and 650 in the next 12 months.

As ever, myself and my team are here to assist you with any problems you may have. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Best wishes  
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