

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

November 2023

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The year is hurtling to a close, with Christmas just around the corner and my resolutions to "be more organised next time" slowly ebbing away!

November kicked off with the [State Opening of Parliament](#). It contained all of the pomp, ceremony and unusual outfits you would expect, culminating in the King's Speech in the House of Lords.

The King's Speech sets out the government's legislative agenda for the coming term. This one contained 21 new Bills including: the Leasehold and Freehold Bill and Renters Reform Bill to support private renters, the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to create a smoke free generation to promote public health and support the NHS, and the Sentencing and Criminal Justice Bills to ensure the Police have the necessary powers to keep us safe. A full list can be found [here](#).



In the King's Speech debate, I took the opportunity to raise the importance of measures to [improve Childhood Cancer services](#) along the lines of the Childhood Cancer Mission I've developed in partnership with Stubbington constituent Charlotte Fairall.

In other political news, this month saw a reshuffle to the Prime Minister's Ministerial team. One of the most headline grabbing appointments was David Cameron as Foreign Secretary. It's fair to say that my mailbag on this appointment has varied wildly. My personal view is that, in this time of troubling global uncertainty, his wealth of experience and respect across the international diplomatic circuit is welcome. Not least in light of the tragic situation which has continued to unfold in Gaza. I've set out my thoughts on these very troubling events on my [website](#).



In local news, [Gosport has been awarded £18m from the Levelling Up fund](#). I backed the original bid for this, which was submitted a couple of years ago by the previous Conservative leaders of Gosport Borough Council. Of course the Council has since changed hands and is now Lib Dem led, so I sought assurances from the Government that the funding will still be used to

restore Gosport's waterfront and the historic Rum Store at Royal Clarence Yard - which will generate jobs and attract investment to

our area.

Earlier in November, it was [UK Parliament Week](#). A chance to raise awareness about what goes on in Westminster and how it impacts our lives. This year, I was invited to join Bay House students for an 'Equaliteas' tea party and lead an assembly at Rowner Junior School about my role as their MP.



I also met with Callum Rodrigues, our local Youth Parliament Member, to hear about his priorities for young people in our area.



I caught up with students as part of the [Schools' Power Boat Challenge](#) at QinetiQ, Haslar. Pupils from across the area, including Key Education Centre in Gosport, took the chance to race their own handmade, remote controlled, power boats on the Haslar water tank, the biggest in Europe.

I was honoured to present Gosport District Scout Awards 2023. It was lovely to hear about the achievements of local Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and have a chance to thank the volunteer leaders who give up their time to ensure Scouting in Gosport continues to go from strength to strength - I know they are always on the lookout for more adults to join the team!

It was Safer Gambling Week November 13-19. Whilst many people enjoy gambling safely, it's important that we recognise the signs of problem gambling and have the proper safeguards in place to protect those who need it, so I stopped by to learn more about the support on offer.



Of course, November 11<sup>th</sup> is Armistice Day. This year marked 105 years since the end of the First World War, and a time for us to come together to honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of our freedoms. I marked the occasion by planting a cross in Parliament's Constituency Garden of Remembrance on behalf of constituents. I also attended Remembrance services at Haslar Hospital Memorial and the Gosport War Memorial.

I was disappointed to see the Armistice and Remembrance Sunday activities in London marred by violence. This occasion is an important reminder of the cost of war and the liberties we enjoy today. This day is especially important to members of our Armed Forces and Veterans, of which Gosport has the highest proportion in England and Wales.



[I welcomed the Minister for Veterans' Affairs](#), Johnny Mercer MP, to Gosport to meet with a number of veterans' support organisations and veteran-run businesses at [FirstLight Trust](#), a café hub on Gosport High Street which provides veterans' support. Johnny has a widely stated ambition of making the UK the best country for veterans to live and work, and a number of measures were introduced in the Autumn Statement earlier this month to that end.



These included a National Insurance holiday to employers of former Armed Forces personnel and a further £10m for the [Veterans' Places, People and Pathways Programme \(VPPP\)](#) to increase support for vulnerable veterans throughout the UK.

However, support for current service personnel is not always as good as it should be. In Defence Questions, I [invited Minister for Defence Procurement](#), James Cartlidge, to HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood to see accommodation conditions for himself. Our service personnel deserve a decent standard of living quarters on our naval establishments, current provision is simply just not good enough.

Among the Culture, Media & Sport Committee sessions this month, we looked at [tourism and hospitality](#) and the support those sectors need to thrive, as well as our [inquiry into women's sport](#). The Committee was also awarded the Industry Champion Award at the Artists & Manager Awards held by the [Featured Artists Coalition](#) and [Music Managers Forum](#). As Chair of the Committee I also [spoke in the Media Bill](#), which was introduced to Parliament this month, welcoming the changes which reflect our proposals to protect the future of public service TV and radio.

I was interviewed by [Channel4](#) and [Times Radio](#) (starting at 09:26) about the recent kerfuffle surrounding the Parthenon Sculptures (or, what were called the Elgin Marbles when I was at school!).

I led a [debate in Parliament on the need for more autism training for education staff](#). The debate called for education staff, from early years to university, to have mandatory training on how to best support autistic children and young people, as well as those with a learning disability. I suggested that training should be built on the model of the Oliver McGowan mandatory training for all health and care staff, that I introduced when I was Minister for Care. This training, which is led by autistic and learning disabled people, is being rolled out and already changing people's experiences of health and care settings. It could save lives. Paula McGowan, the mother of Oliver (the young man for who the training was named) and who is a fantastic campaigner on behalf of autistic people, travelled from her home in Australia to witness this debate.

I know that education standards are an area of real concern for parents in Gosport. I'm constantly on a mission to ensure improvements are made and local teachers and governors have the support they need. Since I became the MP we have seen all our local infant and junior schools rated Good or Outstanding, some have made quite remarkable progress against a difficult backdrop. But we can't take our eye off the ball and the hard work continues. This

month was no different, I met with the Brockhurst Primary School leadership team and the Ofsted Regional Director. I also welcomed Meon Cross Year 6 and Bay House 6th Form Politics students to Parliament for a tour- and faced some of their burning questions!



I really love welcoming constituents to Parliament. If ever you would like a tour of Parliament or a visit to Big Ben (which has recently reopened after a long restoration) please do get in touch. Visitors this month included Emma and Annelies, two fabulous business women who together run the [High Vibes Business Networking](#) group for local businesswomen and entrepreneurs. I nominated them for the MP HERoes reception which brings together amazing women of enterprise from across the country to recognise their efforts.

[I welcomed the vision set out by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement](#). Now that we have inflation under control, the cut in National Insurance from 12% to 10% is welcome, helping to reward work and let people keep more of their hard earned money. I'm also pleased that older people are being supported with the 8.5% increase in State Pension. Benefits were also increased by 6.7%. You can read more about the Autumn Statement [here](#).

November certainly felt like an 'arty' month - I attended the [Y Services](#) art installation at Gosport Museum & Art Gallery - a great showcase of some of the artistic talent amongst our young people, with pieces inspired by Gosport High Street and the sad death of Tilly, a particularly popular local cat.

I also attended a viewing of the 'Alleyways of Gosport', which celebrates some of the historic alleyways around Gosport High Street, decorated by local artists, supported by the Arts Council. You can do a self-guided trail of the work [here](#).

And I met with English Heritage to discuss their plans for Fort Brockhurst.

In Lee on Solent I joined in with [Solent Mobility](#)'s Members Open Day. They offer a range of mobility aids, from furniture to scooters and wheelchairs, as well as smaller household items which help people continue living independently for longer.



It was a privilege to be invited to be an Inspecting Officer at Ceremonial Divisions at HMS Sultan this month. An immaculate turnout of around 1000 Naval Engineers, including cohorts from the Royal Canadian and Pakistan Navy, as well as an impressive group of local Navy and Royal Marine Cadets.

I visited [Gosport Citizens Advice](#) to hear about some of the support they are providing for constituents struggling with the Cost of Living. If you are in need of support, Citizens Advice are a great service to signpost possible avenues available to you. They are also in great need of more volunteer advisors. If you can spare a minimum of 6 hours per week and would like to get involved, please contact them.

As ever I met with a range of other stakeholders across the

constituency throughout this month to champion local issues, these included Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, the Solent Local Enterprise Zone, and the Gosport Taskforce.

I've been knocking on doors in Bridgemary, Lee on the Solent and Rowner with my 'Caroline Consults' survey on Policing and Crime this month. You can contribute your thoughts online [here](#).

I am always in regular contact with Chief Inspector, Chris Spellerberg and Police and Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones. However, in light of the recent murder in Gosport, crime prevention and enforcement is at the forefront of my mind. The police investigation into the murder of Levi Kent is currently ongoing, and 4 people have been charged. I have written to the Lord Chancellor & Justice Secretary, Alex Chalk asking for a Serious Case Review, in light of my deep concern that one of the men charged was recently released from prison on license from a previous jail term for wounding with intent. Questions need to be asked about the terms of this license and how it was managed. I raised this with the Leader of the Commons. You can watch my question [here](#).

As ever, my team and I are here for any questions, thoughts or concerns you may have.

Please do get in touch via [caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk)

Best wishes  
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