

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

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Some of you might be particularly excited to see my February newsletter hit your inbox because it heralds the end of this gloomy month and brings us tantalisingly close to the end of another winter! Let's hope that we will begin to enjoy a little bit more daylight and some sunnier days ahead.

Even with our streets getting lighter, CCTV plays a vital role in keeping people safe. A number of local community groups, led by the wonderful [Women Supporting Women](#) have been concerned about Gosport Borough Council's decision to cease live monitoring of CCTV across our area. This month there was a demonstration outside the Civic Offices and there is a petition which you can sign [here](#). I took the opportunity to [raise the issue](#) with the Women and Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch.

In much more positive news this month I was delighted to reveal that I have been asked to Chair a brand-new Children and Young People Cancer Task Force by the Government. I joined the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Victoria Atkins, at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for this announcement. It comes after years of campaigning alongside the remarkable Charlotte Fairall, the Stubbington resident who founded the charity [Sophie's Legacy](#) in memory of her beautiful daughter, who died from Cancer in 2021. I was honoured to [be joined by Charlotte in the GB News studio to talk about the](#) Task Force. I am looking forward to chairing the first meetings next month, Charlotte will be there too, and we will keep you updated on our progress.



The Children and Young People Cancer Task Force joins the raft of recent Government health announcements, which aim to improve access to healthcare. Hot on the heels of [Pharmacy First](#) launched last month, February brought the [NHS Dental Recovery Plan](#). This will see 2.5 million additional

NHS dental treatments delivered for patients over the next 12 months, backed up by £200 million of funding. Some of you have reached out to me outlining difficulties with securing an appointment with an NHS dentist, so I am glad to see that the Government introduced a list of measures to ensure that everyone who needs to, can see a dentist, making access to care faster and fairer.

From now on, dentists will be offered a bonus to take on more NHS patients; provided with cash incentives to work in underserved areas; dental van services will be available in rural and coastal communities; a 'Smile for Life' initiative for reception and nursery age children will offer vital preventive measures against tooth decay; and mobile dental teams will be going into schools to deliver fluoride varnish treatments.

A new NHS dental contract for Gosport has been commissioned providing more local NHS appointments in the near future. There are a few snags with this, and I am working with the ICB and Dental Practitioner to unlock these issues so that more people can access NHS Dentistry as soon as possible.

This month, I also saw first-hand the results of the NHS long-term workforce plan at the brand-new Portsmouth University Medical School which opens in August. Their new partnership with Kings College London means that 54 fast-track medical students, made up of people who already have a degree in a complementary scientific or health related discipline, will be based in the newly refurbished Portsmouth Uni site from later this year.



Their workplace training will be at the Queen Alexandra Hospital and local GP practices across Gosport and Portsmouth. The hope is that many of them will stay local when they complete their training, giving a much-needed boost to doctor numbers across our area.



I am always glad to see local investment as I know the transformative impact that new businesses and jobs bring. That could not be more true than for Daedalus Airfield where the brand new £2.5 million Overlord Hangar is taking shape. This historic building will house Marine Concepts UK and contribute to the engineering expertise already present at the Lee on Solent and Stubbington site.

In Parliament, [I was happy to remind the Minister for Defence Procurement, James Cartlidge MP](#), about the wealth of aviation engineering skills and experience in our area. As part of the UK Ministry of Defence's (MOD) New Medium Helicopter (NMH) requirement, Standard Aero at Fleetlands has teamed with Lockheed Martin UK to bid for its Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk to replace the UK's mixed medium helicopter fleet. If the bid is successful the contract will mean upwards of 175 new, highly-skilled jobs at the historic Gosport site, which has been the home of UK military rotary wing aircraft for

decades. It would also provide a potential 45-year pipeline of work and make StandardAero, Fleetlands the home of the Black Hawk in the UK.

In the meantime, the [Gosport Sea Cadets received £17,000 from the Government's Youth Investment Fund](#) which will enable Gosport Unit 437 of the Sea Cadet Corps based in Royal Clarence Yard, to refurbish their facilities and support an additional 50 young people per year. I am grateful for the Government's support for this important local community group.

I also met with the organisations involved in the Royal Clarence Yard site. There is lots of exciting work underway to improve the area, including some of the £18m Levelling Up Funding, which I helped secure, to renovate the Rum Store, a derelict Grade II listed building in the heart of the historic waterfront, to house businesses and deliver jobs.



When I was first elected in 2010 nearly half of the infant and junior schools in Gosport were rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate. Across the Constituency in 2010 only 61% of schools were rated Good or Outstanding.

Since then, I have met with Hampshire Council Education Team, relentlessly, twice a year to go through all our schools, line by line, to help drive improvement. I'm delighted that now every single one of the Primary schools across Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head, as well as St Vincent College and The Key are now Good or Outstanding. Sadly, our secondary schools, which are not Local Authority run, have not kept pace and I'm determined to see them improve.



With that in mind I organised the first ever Gosport Secondary School Summit this month. With school leaders, their Multi Academy Trusts, Department of Education and Ofsted representatives all in attendance.

The meeting proved to be an excellent communication platform where we all agreed to launch the Gosport Plan – a 3-year action plan to improve the quality of education in our area. The inaugural meeting of the Steering Group was this week, so stay tuned!



As ever I've been knocking on doors across the constituency weekly with my 'Caroline Consults' survey on Policing and Crime. This month included doorsteps in Daedalus Village and Peel Common. You can contribute your thoughts online [here](#).

My constituency visits have also included a catch up with some of the lovely chaps from the Gosport branch of Andy's Man Club, one of the fastest growing charities in the UK. It's shocking to learn that suicide is the single biggest killer of men under 54. Talking helps, and each Monday at 7-9pm, around 40 men meet at Gosport Rugby Club to share the ups and downs of their lives.

I popped to see Olga and Pat at [Stoke Gallery](#) to see how their shop refurbishment is going. It's a fantastic place to get pictures framed and pick up work by local artist Andy Wing!



I also attended the [Gosport BMX Club Race](#) night to see teams from across the Deep South region competing at the world class track we are lucky to have right here in Gosport. It was a hugely exciting and entertaining evening, great to meet so many of the volunteers who make it happen, with lots of silverware for our local team to boot!



I had a pleasure to visit St Mary's Primary School to award them their Voice 21 Oracy Centre of Excellence award.

I was very impressed with the fantastic communication skills of all the children I met, from years 1-6. They are all a huge credit to their parents, their teachers and the school's relentless focus on quality education!

In Parliament, I had a chance to see the Quilt of Love and Hope stitched by a Gosport constituent, Susan Cramer, featuring panels created by grandparents across the country who are estranged from their grandchildren. A moving and beautiful artwork that makes us think about the special bond between children and their grandparents and the distress caused when those links are broken.



Of course, alongside all of this I have been chairing important sessions of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee. [James Hawes, Director of One Life and Slow Horses](#) joined us to talk about [protecting independent British Film](#).

Earlier in the month, [the Committee spoke to Ministers from DCMS, the Treasury, and the Home Office](#) about the benefits of a return to tax free shopping for tourists to the UK as a way of boosting our tourism and hospitality sectors. The following week we were joined by [representatives from](#) the ECB as part of the Committee's ongoing inquiry into cricket.

I take a keen interest in the opportunities and challenges posed by AI, which is why I [asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer](#), how her Department plans to ensure creators are paid fairly for their work as we face the digital future.



I spoke at events on behalf of the Parliamentary Internet, Communications and Technology Forum (PICTFOR), which I chair, to address concerns about the use of data and consumer privacy rights, at a time when technology is developing rapidly.

I also [chaired a Westminster Hall debate](#) on animal testing and non-animal research methods. During the debate, the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, Andrew Griffith MP, pledged to double investment in research to develop non-animal alternatives from £10 million to £20 million a year from 2024-25. I am glad to see that the Government is taking the necessary steps to stop the practice of animal testing once and for all.

Ahead of the Budget next month, I wrote to the Chancellor [urging him for financial support for the UK independent domestic film industry](#).

I put my name to two more letters to the Chancellor, one [in support of a campaign which warns that the rules would unfairly disadvantage startups founded by women and minorities](#); and the other asking the Chancellor [to drop](#)

[the 'Taxi Tax' at the Budget, and protect the taxi industry which we rely on in the Gosport peninsula.](#)

24<sup>th</sup> of February marked 2 years since the beginning of war in Ukraine. I am proud, not only that the UK is one of the largest aid donors to Ukraine, but that people across the Gosport Constituency, in fact the whole country, continue to open their homes and their hearts to our Ukrainian friends, displaced by this brutal war.



For many of us, these friends have become like family and their country's plight is one we take very personally. To mark the anniversary of the conflict I attended an event in Parliament, which included a heartbreaking display of photos of some of the Ukrainian students who were killed before they were able to graduate from college.

Some of the Government announcements this month you might have missed...

There has been some early good news as this month the Ofgem energy cap will be set at £1,690 meaning that energy prices will fall by £238 per annum.

Portsmouth has been selected as the location for the UK's National Commemorative Event for D-Day 80, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Normandy Landings. The event will be open to the public and more information will soon be available [here](#).

[The Buckland Review of Autism Employment](#) was introduced this week outlining the changes that are needed in workplace culture to support autistic people to start and stay in work. Only 30% of autistic adults are currently employed and I am glad to see that the Government is committed to tackling existing barriers and providing everyone an opportunity to work.

The Government has also recently published the [Disability Action Plan](#) outlining 32 practical actions that will make UK more accessible for everyone. From developing a new guidance on how political parties and public bodies can best support disabled candidates to creating an information hub for local authorities on the construction of accessible playgrounds.

The Government has launched a major new campaign - Stop! Think Fraud - to combat fraudsters. You can find out how to spot fraud, and find out whether you're at risk, at <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/>.

[Carers UK](#) and Parliament Group for Carers are asking current and former unpaid carers, their employers and the community groups that support them, to take part in the survey. You can do it [here](#).

So, that's it for February! 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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