

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

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The first two weeks of April coincided with Parliamentary recess, and with no complex legislation to review or debate in the Chamber, I was glad to spend more time working from my Constituency office and supervising the GCSE preparation of one of my sons, a task I consider no less challenging!

I also had a chance to chat to many of you on the doorsteps, as the 'Caroline Consults' weekly door-knocking sessions I've been conducting since the start of 2023 gave way to Local Election campaigning. I was joined by councillors, volunteers and even the Conservative Party Chairman, Richard Holden, who visited Gosport in order to support our great [local candidates](#).



With local elections on Thursday, I will be sending an Election Special newsletter tomorrow, with more details about the candidates in your area and where you can cast your votes.

However, one of the people missing from the list will be the wonderful Cllr Maggie Morgan, the Grange Ward Councillor and local youth worker. Maggie passed away quite suddenly this month, her death came as a terrible shock to many people in our community who knew and loved her. She changed lives in the Gosport area, particularly of the young people she worked with. So few people can genuinely say that. Maggie will be greatly missed.



Homes and shops in Alverstoke Village, and businesses in Victoria Quay, suffered significant and distressing flood impact at the start of this month. According to Southern Water it "was caused by seawater during strong winds at high tide".



I was in Alverstoke early the next morning to offer support to those impacted and help them get access to the necessary information. I was impressed by the togetherness shown by our local community and would like to say a big thank you to all who helped, including GAFIRS, Gosport Rotary Club, local Councillors - Zoe Huggins, Kevin Casey and Lesley Meenaghan, and staff at Gosport Borough Council.

There are now questions to be answered about how this occurred and what Gosport Council and other agencies could have done to prevent it, most importantly how to stop it happening again. I have asked for a meeting with the relevant Minister on this. I have also written to the Oil Fuel Depot to alert them to the damage caused at Victoria Quay and the insufficiency of their sea wall.

A quick update for those of you who are concerned about telegraph poles installed by tooob. In my March newsletter, I mentioned that I raised the issue with Ofcom and met with the Minister for Data and Digital Infrastructure, Julia Lopez MP. The Minister has now written a follow-up with several actions, including raising operators' awareness on their statutory responsibilities and giving local planning authorities (such as Gosport and Fareham Borough Councils) more guidance on their existing powers.

I will keep monitoring the situation closely and have already written to both Gosport Borough Council and Fareham Borough Council – if you would like to receive updates on this particular issue, please let me know.

In other news, the Transport for the South East are looking to reform their Transport Strategy. Don't forget to share your thoughts and point out what you would like to see improved. You can complete the survey [here](#).

Nominations for Gosport Business Awards are also closing this week on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May! There are 8 different categories to choose from and I encourage you to put forward your favourite local business for this well-deserved recognition. You can take part [here](#).

Many of you will be happy to hear that Waitrose & Partners will be remaining on Stoke Road after John Lewis & Partners renewed the lease. I know the 5-year term will be extremely welcome to those who use the store and is another vote of confidence in our high streets!



I was delighted to join the grand opening of one local business, [Juneberry](#), on Pier Street in Lee on the Solent, and a perfect place to find unique gifts and household pieces. I was also honoured to join Admiral Sir Jonathon Band at the Grand Opening of Marine Concepts new Overlord Hangar at Solent Airport, Daedalus. With £2.5 million invested in the development, delivering 100 jobs and cutting-edge composite engineering.

I also caught up with the Manager of the Osborne View pub in Hill Head, which sadly burnt down in February as the result of an electrical fire. The good news is that nobody was hurt and the company plan to rebuild and reopen the pub on the site as soon as they can.



I was happy to hear about the free Open Days at Fort Brockhurst – two Saturdays per month throughout the summer. I met with the Sustainable Conservation Trust and English Heritage to explore the future potential of the Fort. Sites like this can be used to support heritage skills and creative arts, attract tourists and further investment, and I believe that we must not let them decay. I reiterated the importance of historic buildings in the Parliament, asking the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer MP, why heritage buildings such as Forts Rowner and Grange in HMS Sultan are allowed to disintegrate under a policy of “managed decline”. You can watch my question [here](#).



I was pleased to join CEO, Hannah Prowse, at the launch of the newly rebranded Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust as Portsmouth Heritage Quarter.

PHQ have a key role in reviving the heritage assets of our historic harbour and driving footfall to important sites around it, including Priddys Hard, Gosport, home to various culture and heritage organisations.

I had a chance to hear more about the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) holiday clubs in a meeting with the [Globe Fit](#) team, who run clubs at a number of sites across the constituency.

The programme is designed for children from Reception to year 11 and funded by the Department for Education. It provides children with fun activities and nutritious meals during the school holidays.

Regular readers will know that improving the quality of education in our area has always been one of my priorities, it's why I welcome the news that all of our local Primary Schools are now rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted and why I organised a Gosport Secondary School Summit in February. But while academic achievements are vital, the health and happiness of our children is too.

I visited the Mini Medics First Aid course organised by [No Fear First Aid](#). The course, for children aged 6-11, teaches basic first aid, CPR and safe use of defibrillators. Sarah and Robbie promise to announce more courses in the next school holidays soon, so please check their socials for details.



Another service, outside our area, Young People's Safe Haven in Havant offers one-to-one support sessions with a wellbeing practitioner. A very positive safe space for those aged 11-17 to discuss mental health concerns, no appointment necessary. More details can be found [here](#).

Expanding skillsets can significantly boost opportunities, and for many young people this can be absolutely life changing. [Plan B](#) teach local students, struggling in mainstream school, useful life-skills that can turn into possible careers. To showcase results of their work, Plan B organise supporters lunches with local charity partners, cooked by the young chefs. I was lucky to be invited to join them.



I really enjoyed catching-up with volunteers and supporters of [Gosport's Acts of Kindness Community \(Solent\)](#). They provide invaluable support to local people with food deliveries and other help. If you would like to get involved and donate food or your time, get in touch.

I also caught up with Gosport Fairtrade Action, who encourage us to buy food that is sourced fairly and ethically. They are keen to connect with local businesses. Reach out via [gospportfa@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:gospportfa@tiscali.co.uk) if you would like to hear more about their work supporting farmers worldwide.

I also attended a Veterans Breakfast at Hornet Sailing Club - these well attended get togethers for a yummy breakfast and a good chinwag take place on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Saturdays of the month, find out more [here](#).

The mighty Portsmouth Football Club secured victory in the League One and promotion to the Championship this month, as a lifelong fan I couldn't resist the opportunity to [congratulate Pompey in the Chamber](#). Their success underlined the importance of local clubs in our communities. That is why we must preserve the fabric of our national game and establish an Independent Football Regulator. You can see my contribution in the Second Reading of the Football Governance Bill, where I also gave a shout out to a couple of other local Clubs, Gosport Boro' (for reaching the playoffs) and Fleetlands FC.

In Westminster news this month:

The Government has made [a decisive commitment to spend 2.5% of GDP on defence](#) by 2030. This means an immediate boost in spending that will translate into an extra £75 billion for our defence over the next six years. The unprecedented level of funding will make the UK the biggest defence power in Europe, second only to the USA in NATO.

Minister Jacob Young MP confirmed that the successful £18 million Levelling Up Fund for Gosport Waterfront was secured by the previous Gosport Conservatives administration of Gosport Borough Council, and not the Liberal Democrats as has been misleadingly claimed in some of the leaflets that have been circulating in the run up to Thursday's local elections. You can find his letter [here](#).

Safety of Rwanda Bill completed its passage through Parliament. I made a short video to explain what it actually means and how it will help to tackle illegal migration. You can watch it [here](#).

The UK is now the 4<sup>th</sup> largest exporter in the world – up from 7<sup>th</sup> in the world export rankings. Great to see that the country is on a path of steady economic

recovery.

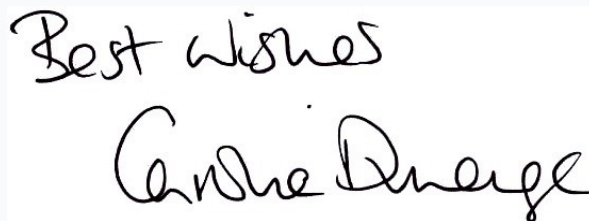
The Culture, Media and Sport Committee I chair recently published a report on Creator Remuneration to discuss the issues that artists and creators experience. I visited DACS members Art Space Portsmouth to mark the launch. You can read the full report [here](#).

The Government launched a consultation to hear your views on how to make the benefit system fit for the future and fair for the taxpayer. It is open until 22<sup>nd</sup> of July and you can participate [here](#).

With the Carers Leave Act in force from this month, unpaid carers are entitled to a week's unpaid leave. If you would like to read my thoughts about the legislation and what I feel should be the next steps for supporting carers, you can read the article that I have written [here](#).

National Insurance and Pension changes came into force this month saving working people around £900 pounds per year and increasing pensions by 8.5%.

So, that's it for April! 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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