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**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT
LEE ON THE SOLENT • STUBBINGTON • HILL HEAD**



NEWSLETTER

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September has been a whirlwind of activity both in Parliament and across Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head.

In Westminster, I expressed my concerns about a number of new pieces of Government legislation that are already causing distress and uncertainty for many of my constituents.



The Government's ill-timed decision to cut Winter Fuel Payments for thousands of pensioners means that an estimated 15,000 people will be deprived of this vital support during cold winter months in Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington, and Hill Head.

I object to the brutal way this policy has been rolled out, with little thought to the consequences for the many pensioners across our area who are just outside of the eligibility for Pension Credit.

I articulated my position in a letter to the Chancellor that you can read [here](#). I have already received a response, I found it disappointing. You can have a look at it [here](#).

I voted twice against this policy and pointed out to the Treasury Minister that it is simply unfair to characterise pensioners as wealthy and undeserving of additional financial support. You can watch that [here](#).

It's vital that the thousands of pensioners who are currently not claiming Pension Credit but are entitled to, now do so - Age UK has a helpful information page [here](#). You can also sign their petition against the changes [here](#).

I am also deeply worried about the Health Secretary's decision this month to pause the vital work of the

Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce. Regular readers will know that I fought so hard to secure this Taskforce, alongside my constituent Charlotte Fairall, the Founder of Sophie's Legacy. The Taskforce was created to meaningfully improve detection, treatment, and care for children with cancer.



With cancer being the leading cause of death of children under the age of 14, we must not forget that only 3% of cancer research funds are allocated for children. I voiced my concerns directly to the Secretary of State in Parliament. You can watch my question and Wes Streeting's response [here](#).

On local healthcare, I caught up with the bosses at Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board. Thanks to relentlessly raising GP access at all levels, NHS England data now shows Gosport has the most face-to-face GP appointments in Hampshire. We've also been visited from the Dental Bus to ensure qualifying residents, without an NHS Dentist, can get an appointment – you can find out more [here](#).

During Parliamentary Questions, I urged the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to provide urgent funding for the Alverstoke Village Flood Defences and requested a meeting. Storm Pierrick had a destructive impact on Alverstoke in April, with over 50 homes evacuated, and dozens of houses, cars and businesses damaged.

The Environment Agency have now upgraded the likelihood of this reoccurring from 1:100 years to 1:20 years. Some people still haven't been able to return to their homes and we simply cannot afford delays with funding and repairs. You can watch my question [here](#).



In Gosport, I called a meeting with all agencies that are involved in the Alverstoke Coastal Defence Scheme, including Southern Water, Coastal Partners, Environment Agency, SSE and others. Local Councillors and I are arranging a resilience meeting for local residents to meet all the relevant organisations ahead of the winter months.

I participated in a debate on Special Educational Needs and Disability provision for children and suggested expanding the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on learning disability and autism, which health professionals now receive, to teachers. I mentioned the importance of early diagnosis and the need to support teachers with the best possible training. I also highlighted that the Government's plans to impose VAT on independent schools will have a detrimental impact on SEND children. You can watch my contribution [here](#).

Following the Government's announcement of this legislation, I have received a lot of correspondence from families across the Gosport constituency who have shared their fears for the future well-being of their children. Mostly, these letters are from parents of SEND children, for whom mainstream schooling was not a success, and military families, who fear their service deployments will impact the education and mental health of their children.

In most cases these are not wealthy families, they are normal people making daily sacrifices in order to deliver the right solution for their own children - they simply cannot afford an extra 20% on these fees. I have therefore written to the Secretary of State for Education to urge her to take into account these concerns. For those of you who are interested in this particular issue, please do let me know and I will keep you updated.

Many of you will know that I meet twice a year with education bosses at Hampshire County Council to go through our local schools line by line and ensure they are getting the support they need. In our recent discussion, it was encouraging to hear positive reports on our primary schools. Whilst all our secondary schools in the constituency are academies, Hampshire County Council continues to work with them to try and improve the education on offer for all young people.

I also met with the Chief Executive of [King's Group Academy](#), who have recently taken Bay House, Brune Park, Gomer Junior School and Rowner Junior School under their trust. It is encouraging that he was fully apprised of the various concerns and strengths of all four schools, and I look forward to working with him on their improvement journeys.

I had a chance to see Leigh-Sara Timberlake from [Business South](#) for coffee to explore how we can attract funding into the Gosport peninsula. I believe that with our beautiful coast and heritage we have a lot to offer to the national and international investors.

In a meeting with Cllr Chegwyn, the leader of Gosport Borough Council, I asked about the future plans in regard to Gosport High Street and was updated on his ideas for a People's Park in place of the Bus Station. In light of the Winter Fuel Payment cuts and looming energy price rises I was pleased to hear that GBC is arranging an event for those who need support and advice with heating bills and the cost of living. The drop-in will take place tomorrow Tuesday 1st October at 10:00-12:00 in Gosport Discovery Centre, do pop by if you are available.

I was disturbed to hear that constituents who waited for up to 10 hours in an online queue to buy tickets for Oasis concerts, were greeted with prices far above their expectations thanks to a 'dynamic ticketing policy' that nobody had been made aware of. The Competition and Markets Authority have now opened an investigation into this, and the Government announced the inclusion of ticket pricing in their consultation on ticket touts, but more should be done to improve transparency and information to consumers.

To look into the issue further, I led a debate on this and called on the Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism, Chris Bryant MP, to conduct a wider review into the live music sector. You can watch what I said in the Chamber [here](#).

I am glad that I was re-elected as Chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in Parliament and will therefore be able to hold the Government to account in all matters related to these sectors, which are all so vital for both our national economy and global influence.

I met with Eamon Keating, Chair of the [Defence Police Federation](#), the organisation that represents officers in the Ministry of Defence Police.

We talked about the role of the force in protecting our military sites, including defence munitions in Gosport.

I was invited to the Army Expo 2024 to meet a number of the fantastic people who make our armed forces the best in the world.

I was also fortunate to see for myself the impressive new equipment being adopted by the British Army such as Challenger 3, Ajax and Ares, all of which will build resilience for the future.



I also had an opportunity to catch up with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Chief Constable Scott Chilton and discuss policing and crime in the Gosport area. I was pleased to hear that crime has fallen across the constituency since Scott took over in this role. We both agreed that the planned re-opening of the Gosport Police Station in the coming year will bring substantial benefits to our area.

In a meeting with Sarah Burrows, who is the Founder of [Children Heard and Seen](#), an organisation that assists children and families impacted by parental imprisonment, we explored the need for closer collaboration between schools, police, local authorities, and social impact groups.

I visited [Gosport Inclusion](#), who support local people with substance abuse issues. We talked through the challenges that the Hub is currently facing and I will be communicating their concerns to the relevant authorities. If you are interested in the topic or directly impacted, get in touch to receive regular updates.

I popped into the office of Citizens Advice Gosport to congratulate the team who've reached the rolling green category of the Advice Quality Standard Mark. This means that the service provided has been of continuously high quality across the years. This is of course an indication of the amazing work that they do in our community. The team mentioned that they are looking for volunteers, so if you have an hour to spare and would like to help, you can contact Citizens Advice [here](#).

The call for volunteers is also shared by the Family Church in Bridgemary, who provide food and necessities to those who need support. They also arrange events and activities, you can find out more by getting in touch with them [here](#).

This month I have been learning about how Social Prescribing is working in our community. This is where patients are signposted to local health and wellbeing projects, often to help with medical rehabilitation or as an alternative to medication. I joined three different groups to find out more about....

The Walking for Health group, run by Gosport Voluntary Action, organise regular rambles at points across the constituency, a great way to combine gentle exercise with friendly company and the health benefits of being in the great outdoors.

They also arrange historical walks which explore local culture and heritage at the same time. More information can be found [here](#).

They are on the hunt for more walk leaders if you would like to help out.



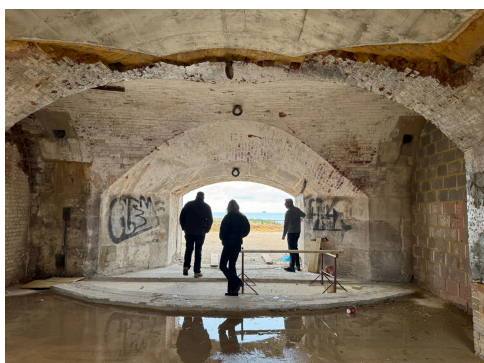
The Willow Garden at Forton Medical Centre is a gardening project within a lovely supportive community setting. Love Outdoors kindly invited me for a tour and a session of tai-chi in the garden. If you would like to join the group, they run sessions every Thursday morning and on the second Sunday of every month. You can sign up via the link [here](#) or through their Facebook page.

I was also glad to participate in the weekly 'keep fit' class with the Gosport and Fareham Multiple Sclerosis group at the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church in Stubbington.

With the help of a £15,000 Sport England grant, the group helps those with MS keep active. You can find out more [here](#).

[Gosport Heritage Open Days](#) were a triumph once again this year. I attended a talk on the "Smells of Old Gosport" at the Gosport Museum which was a really evocative trip down memory lane via the nose, with scents ranging from cold tar soap to pear drops!

I went on an excellent guided walk that focused on the fascinating history of Rowner and Alver Valley, and was sad to discover that Apple Dumpling Bridge did not have the quaint origins I was hoping for!



I caught up with the team redeveloping Fort Gilkicker. It was great to see the progress with the reconstruction of this incredibly complex site and how they are breathing new life into these awe-inspiring historic buildings, with the most spectacular Solent views.

I also attended the South Championships at the [BMX Club](#). Well done to all

participants and organisers who consistently ensure that our local track remains among the best in the UK.

It was a pleasure to pop along to Gosport Rotary's annual Michaelmas Fayre and catch up with a number of our brilliant local organisations including [Plan B](#), [Gospotarians](#), [Shore Leave](#), the [Gosport Shed](#) and many more!

Macmillan Coffee Morning in the [Hardway Sailing Club](#) was absolutely lovely, with delicious cake, friendly chat and exciting raffle raising £747 for this important charity.



Luke Haile from Gosport successfully represented the UK at the [World Skills Olympics](#), coming away with a bronze medal against 24 global competitors in the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning category. Well done Luke!

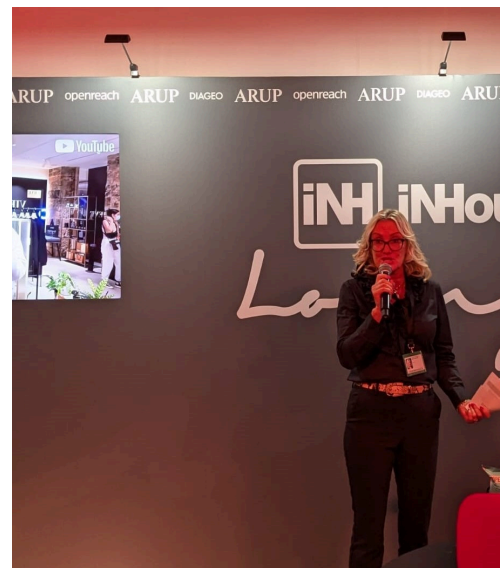
Applications for the Kellogg's Breakfast Club are now open. Schools can apply for a £1000 grant to help fund their breakfast club and ensure every child starts the day with a nutritious meal. You can find out about the application process [here](#).

[Repair Café](#) will be holding drop-in events at Fort Brockhurst on Saturday 12th October and Rowner Community Centre on Saturday 9th November, so if you need the assistance of their expert team of volunteers, do go and visit them.

This edition of my newsletter lands in your inbox just as I leave the Conservative Party Conference, having attended and spoken at an array of fringe events, hustings and meetings.

It's fair to say I haven't been a regular attendee at Conference over the years!

However, I am keen to be part of the process to rebuild the Conservative Party in the wake of July's devastating General Election result.



As the process to choose our new party leader heats up, it's vital (in my opinion) that the victor is someone who can unite the party around our shared Conservative values (which have always been so strongly aligned with the values of the British people) and hold the Labour Party to account in a strong and principled way.

So, that's it for September! 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

Best wishes
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