

CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

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



NEWSLETTER

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April concluded with glorious weather and equally positive news for Portsmouth FC fans that Pompey had secured their place in the Championship again for next season. Football was also on the agenda in Parliament, where the Football Governance Bill came to the House of Commons for its Second Reading.

I spoke in the debate emphasising the need for the Independent Regulator to be just that, independent, and expressing concerns that the Government's preferred candidate for the role, David Kogan, also happens to be a major Labour Party donor, who had funded the election campaigns of a number of MPs, including Chancellor, Rachel Reeves. You can listen to what I said [here](#).

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, which I Chair, will carry out a pre-appointment hearing with the candidate next week. This month we have been looking into community and school sport and exploring initiatives that boost participation.

We heard from a range of organisations with growing participation including Cheerleading, Bowls England and the Lawn Tennis Association who are also responsible for Padel Tennis, and you can listen to our discussion [here](#). You might also be interested to know that we are getting our first Padel Tennis courts at Gosport Leisure Centre later this year.



With sports in mind, it was a pleasure to visit the Gosport Bowmen archery club to see the members in action. I even had a go at hitting the target myself!

The Club secured some extra funding through the Flutter's Cash4Clubs programme in 2023 and with 80 members and volunteers supporting its work, Gosport Bowmen are thriving.

Meanwhile, big congratulations were in order for all those who took part in the Gosport Golden Mile, in support

of the Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service.

I was also delighted to meet with Places Leisure to find out more about their Big Sister project at the Gosport Leisure Centre, which focuses on keeping girls aged 9-15 engaged in sporting activities.

Puberty is a time when many teenage girls disengage from school sports and club sports, so it's important to find ways to keep them healthy and active. You can find out more [here](#).



It was lovely to take part in the Gosport Scouts Saint George's Day Parade and celebration. 800 young people are currently involved across Gosport, but there is a waiting list because of a lack of adult leaders. Do get in touch with them via dc@gosportscouts.org.uk if you would like to volunteer.

Happy to remind all my readers that Gosport Marine Festival is going to take place on Saturday 17th May from 10:00 to 16:00 and you can find out more about all activities on offer [here](#).

And for those looking for a bit of music, enjoy the Sea Shanty Festival with various groups performing around the waterfront on the same day. Check out timings and locations [here](#).

While outdoor activity is so vital for children, it's important play facilities are safe. I joined local councillors and residents to push for improvements to Griffin Walk Play Area.

The site is tired and hazardous and local families deserve better. Having finally persuaded Gosport Borough Council to release the RoSPA report on the safety of the site, I am now carefully considering the findings.





I also appeared on ITV Meridian politics show, The Last Word, to talk about, among other things, the Supreme Court decision on the definition of a woman and school breakfast clubs. You can listen to what I said [here](#).

After being contacted by concerned residents, I spoke to King's Academy Bay House and Brune Park about the closure of their sports facilities to the public.

I was assured that facilities are still open via lettings made with local clubs or associations, but walk-in sessions will no longer be available. It's still not clear if this decision is related to the Government's decision to cancel the Opening School Facilities Fund - which paid schools to make their sports pitches etc available to local people - as that also ceased at the start of April. I raised this in Questions to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and you can watch what I said [here](#).

I also caught up with Rob Johnson, CEO of Future Fit Training, to talk about pathways for local people to get jobs in the sport and health sectors. You can read more about this organisation and the training on offer [here](#).

As I mentioned in my previous newsletter, the Labour Government's decision to hike Employer National Insurance Contributions and increase the minimum wage is adding to the financial pressure on local businesses. I am hearing increasingly from those running childcare settings, care homes, hospitality and the hair and beauty industry, with many business owners saying that this is simply the most turbulent period they have ever experienced outside of the Pandemic.

With all these concerns in mind, I organised a Hair & Beauty Roundtable for local employers. Costs for a small salon are set to rise by over £25,000 a year, putting apprenticeships in danger and incentivising bosses to move their staff to self-employment. I took the opportunity to raise these issues in Parliament outlining that the Treasury is shooting itself in the foot by undermining a sector that brings £5 billion to our economy. You can hear my speech [here](#).

I plan to hold similar roundtable events with other sectors across the coming months to better understand the pressures that are impacting them and what can be done to help those who are struggling.





I was overjoyed to present Windsor Castle Pub with their prize for winning the inaugural Gosport's Best Pub competition. My office received over 1600 votes and Kathy and Chris were the worthy winners. I heard that their community engagement and popular weekly live music performances are responsible for securing such a healthy number of votes.

I also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Gosport Globe, brilliant free online community newspaper, that many of us have been reading since 2015. You can find out more and read their work [here](#).

To further support our business community, I have invited the Google Digital Garage to the Constituency on Friday 30th May. They will run business growth workshops, one-on-one mentoring sessions with Google Digital Coaches, and a networking opportunity. The event is completely free and you can sign up for it [here](#).

Google Digital Garage:
Gosport

Friday 30 May, 10:00

[Register today](#)

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There's also the 'Help to Grow: Management Course' at the University of Portsmouth. After all my efforts to lobby the Department for Business and Trade to continue its funding, the programme is now running for a fifth consecutive year. The course is free for participating businesses and deemed by many former participants as transformative for their business practices and operations. Spaces are limited, secure yours [here](#).



The new Mumby's AI Hub in Gosport can also offer help and advice on seizing the opportunities of AI to grow your business.

It is based in the beautiful historic 1850 soda factory, and I visited the team myself to hear more about their services.

You can get in touch with them [here](#).

AI brings life-changing innovation, but with this mind-blowing technology also comes the responsibility to protect our gold standard copyright standards. AI and creative industries can coexist, but it is essential to ensure that our creators are fairly compensated for their work.

I spoke about this in Parliament [here](#). I was also invited to speak in an AI & Copyright event in the House of Lords, alongside a childhood favourite of mine Björn from ABBA!



There are several local issues that I want to update you on:



I attended the Southern Water Parliamentary drop-in and asked their Chief Customer Officer to organise a public meeting in Gosport, so that residents can share concerns over rising bills, sewage outflows and Peel Common waste treatment works with water bosses. My team is now liaising with Southern Water to find a suitable date for this, and I encourage everyone who is interested in attending to keep a close eye on my Facebook page for an update.

I met with Hyde Group and Southern Housing that manage some properties in the Gosport area. I raised residents' concerns including the lack of transparency in the breakdown of service charges, delays with outstanding cases, and deteriorating quality of service. If you are impacted by the actions of these or other property management organisations, get in touch with me at caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk.

I caught up with Donna Jones, to hear about the progress on the reopening of the Gosport Police Station. We made a video explaining the process of reconstruction and you can watch it [here](#).

I met with Citizens Advice to compare notes about the casework which is crossing our desks. They are always on the lookout for more volunteers to support local people facing challenges and hardship. You can find out more [here](#).

I will be meeting with ICB in the next couple of weeks alongside local residents to discuss pharmacy provision in Lee-on-the-Solent and will keep you in the loop with any updates.

I visited the Dentaaid mobile dental unit at the Nimrod Community Centre to hear more about this service. Since February last year, Dentaaid has been funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight NHS to provide weekly dental care at three different locations across Gosport. It's the first service of its type in the country and was introduced to address the shortfall in mainstream NHS Dentistry provision. The mobile units operate from 09:00-16:00 and you can make an appointment by calling 023 8001 4450. You can also read more about Dentaaid [here](#).



The work of the Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce continues apace, and we hope to have concrete recommendations to the Department of Health and Social Care by this summer. Separately, I caught up with the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, to discuss how her office can feed into the work of the Taskforce.

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

Best wishes
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