

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

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



## NEWSLETTER

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December's newsletter hits your inbox just in time for the New Year's Eve preparations - and whether that's a glitzy party, a family meal or a cosy night in front of the telly, I hope you have a lovely time.

I feel like I skidded into the Christmas holiday season at full pelt, so it has been a blessing to have some relaxing time at home, in Gosport, with family and friends.

And whilst it is entirely normal for the final month of each year to be busy in Westminster, this Government really did squeeze in a record number of statements and announcements in those final days of the Parliamentary term.

Justice Secretary, David Lammy MP, shared a contentious decision to abolish trial by jury for almost all crimes. This shocked many cross-party MPs, especially, when we recalled how David Lammy himself argued that jury trials are "*fundamental to our democracy*" only a couple of years ago. I am worried that this policy will infringe on our democratic rights and undermine trust in the judicial process. I raised my concerns in the Chamber, you can watch that [here](#).

When it comes to the state of the economy, I was troubled by figures published in December showing unemployment rose to 5.1%. This is higher than at any point since the pandemic and comes on the back of 14 straight months of rising unemployment. But how can small businesses be expected to hire in such an uncertain environment? I shared snippets from my conversations with local businesses in Parliament [here](#) when I took part in a debate on youth employment and seasonal working, telling the Minister which Christmas Carol character I believe he is (have a look [here](#)). It is upsetting to think of this having a very direct impact on our community. The number of young people on out of work benefits in Gosport jumped 31% this year, you can read my opinion piece in The News [here](#).

And it is not only commercial enterprises that are struggling. Membership charities, whose work supports the public good, are facing millions of pounds of lost revenue, due to the unintended consequences of the Digital Markets Act. I hosted a Parliamentary debate to push for the necessary tweaks to legislation and asked the Charities Minister, Stephanie Peacock MP, to urgently ensure

they don't lose the right to claim Gift Aid, which makes such a huge contribution to their income. You can read the transcript of the debate [here](#).

Another issue which many of you have contacted me about is the uncertainty surrounding Mayoral and Local Elections in May 2026. The latest update is that Mayoral elections **have now been postponed**, most likely until 2028, although the devolution which goes alongside them will continue. On the last day of the Parliamentary session the Government announced that Local Elections may be postponed again too, depending on whether local Councils have the capacity to deliver them alongside the Local Government Reorganisation consultation process (see below). Effectively they have put the ball into the court of Local Authorities.

I oppose any further delay which, at a time of instability, is bound to further erode trust in democracy and our political system. I talked about this in Parliament, you can listen to what I said [here](#). Hampshire County Council and Fareham Borough Council have indicated that they would like elections to go ahead and, as things stand, we are **awaiting information** from Gosport Borough Council. Councils have until 15th January to feed their decision back to Government.

Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire is now ongoing, and you can submit your thoughts to [LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk](mailto:LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk) before 11 January 2026. In the absence of a contribution from Gosport Borough Council, I decided it was important to share our views to ensure that local interests are represented in the process. You can read what I had to say [here](#).

I gave evidence at an oral hearing with the NHS on the proposal for a new pharmacy in Lee-on-the-Solent. Prior to this, my office and I contacted local residents to get their views on the need for additional provision in the area. Based on the feedback, my message to the hearing was that there is certainly the demand for more pharmacy capacity in Lee, particularly outside of the normal opening times of the small Boots branch. We are now awaiting the decision.

I was sad to read that Gosport Borough Council received the lowest possible rating by a Government Regulator for the management of its social housing. The report published by the Government's Social Housing Regulator is an eye-opener for tenants and local taxpayers. I have been concerned about GBC's focus on council accommodation provision for some time and even raised this in Parliament in October. You can access the report [here](#), and I have written to GBC to ask for urgent action and transparency.

Another pressing local matter is Evri's recent performance. In the run up to Christmas holidays, I received an overwhelming number of requests for help from constituents whose parcels were lost, misplaced or simply abandoned. I wrote to Evri's CEO highlighting various cases that were brought to me by residents. Their response and next steps are available [here](#). I discussed this on BBC Radio Solent, and you can tune in [here](#).

Despite all these challenges, we also received some wonderful news in December.

Gosport will be granted £750,000 via the Creative People & Places fund and the money will be spent on programmes developed with direct input from local people. The boss of Arts Council England, Darren Henley, and his team came to Gosport to meet me and the local organisations, Motiv8, Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire Cultural Trust, Community First, Incredible Edible, and St Vincent College, who will be involved in delivering the project. Darren and I filmed a video for you with some more details [here](#).



Huge progress at M27 Junction 10 – where a concrete box weighing in at around 8,500 tonnes and 65-metres in length is being gently eased into place to create a new tunnel under the motorway across just 12 days. The time-lapse footage shows how exactly this gigantic structure is being moved and you can watch it [here](#).

Local company, STS Defence have been awarded a £12.96 million MoD contract to provide and install communications equipment on the next batch of Type 26 frigates. I am delighted to hear that Gosport's skills and expertise have been duly recognised. More information about this is available [here](#).

Some readers might remember that I wrote to the MoD about the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the need to better support the personnel who are vital for our defence operations across the globe. I have now received a letter from the Department, which you can read [here](#). There are mixed opinions on taking RFA out of regular Civil Service pay structures and I will monitor all further developments closely.

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, which I chair, has been looking at children's TV and online content and heard from Oli Hyatt of multi-award-winning Blue Zoom Animation Studio that makes kids programmes like Alphablocks & Numberblocks. Oli said that spending on children's TV content has fallen, and he is worried about the impact this might have on children's development. You can listen to our exchange [here](#). The Committee is keen to hear more from parents, you can share your thoughts [here](#).

The Committee also launched a Major Events inquiry, which has become particularly relevant in light of the recent debacle around West Midlands Police decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from the Aston Villa football match. We have previously recommended tightening up Safety Advisory Groups and I was curious to hear whether the Government have taken this on board. You can watch my exchange with Home Office Minister, Sarah Jones MP [here](#).



Despite hectic times in Westminster, I didn't forget to enjoy some local Christmas cheer. I caught up with residents and staff at Elizabeth Lodge care home where children from Alver Valley Schools were treating them to some festive Christmas tunes. One of Gosport's more senior Santas, the delightful Joe, warmed all of our hearts with a few songs. I also dropped into Community First's festive celebration for their brilliant volunteers.

One early morning I made my annual visit to the hard-working posties at Gosport Delivery office, taking some choccies to thank them for their relentless hard work and good spirits, while keeping those endless Christmas cards and parcels flowing at such a busy time.



I visited Santa's Grotto at C2U on Gosport High Street, where I met the Grinch, who was much friendlier than expected!



I had a wonderful time catching up with the team, who provided 50 families with Christmas gifts for children this year.

I was invited to the unveiling of Gosport and Fareham Rugby Football Club's new outdoor defibrillator. It was a pleasure to meet David, whose remarkable story inspired the installation.

He suffered a cardiac arrest while training with the Road Runners near the club back in July and was fortunate that Taff from Gosport & Fareham Walking Rugby, who is also GAFIRS lifeboat crew, was on hand to use the defibrillator from inside the club. QA Hospital said that the quick action by Taff and others saved David's life. I would like to say a big thank you to all members of the Rugby club, Bows Club and others who together managed to fundraise over £2,500. They are now fundraising for 3 further machines for sites across the local area.

I was very excited to meet Eleanor from Brockhurst Primary School who won my 2025 Christmas Card Competition. This year we had hundreds of entries, and it was incredibly difficult to choose a winner. I visited Eleanor in her classroom to announce the news and deliver her prize, a particularly snuggly House of Commons teddy. A huge thank you to all the talented young artists who entered the competition.



I was extremely proud to hear that 6th Gosport Rowner Air Scout Group were awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service 2025. This is a remarkable achievement and a reminder that organisations in our community are truly special. Those volunteers work so hard to provide scouting activities and support young people. You can find out more about them and get in touch [here](#).

I was very happy to congratulate David and Laura, at Finishing Touches Gift Shop in Lee-on-the-Solent, on winning my annual Best Independent Shop competition.

This public poll on my Facebook site received more than 2,000 votes and local people were emphatic in their support for so many of our outstanding local traders.

The winners were awarded a bottle of House of Commons bubbly.



It was a real treat to see so many local faces at my annual [Volunteers' Reception](#) in Parliament. It's my way of saying thank you to representatives from some of the community groups and charities who give so much of their time and energy and help make Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington, and Hill Head such special places to live. This year we welcomed 30 organisations, from Age Concern to the Men's Shed and BMX Club to Gosportarians.



I also want to say a huge thank you to my awesome team in Gosport and Westminster. They've dealt with literally thousands of constituent enquiries and items of casework, ensured I am campaigning in Parliament on the issues which matter to local people, and communicating back, while managing hundreds of meetings, surgery appointments and visits - largely getting me in the right place at the right time, despite my best efforts!

They are Glenn, Linden, Anastasiia, Tash, Jeremy, Will, Andy, Louise and Thomas. As ever we are here for any questions, thoughts or concerns you may have. Please get in touch via [caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk).

So that's it for December and 2025!

All that remains is to thank all my newsletter readers for your engagement and support this year and wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026 xxx



Best wishes  
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