

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

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



As May draws to an end I can't help reflecting on what an eventful and dramatic few weeks it's been.

Though it feels like a long time ago already, Local Elections for Gosport and Fareham Borough Councils and Hampshire County Council saw big changes to our political map.

The most significant local change is that Gosport Borough Council is under new management, with the fantastic new team of Cllr Zoe Huggins taking over as Leader and Cllr Lesley Meenaghan as Deputy Leader.

The Gosport Conservatives team showed that year-round hard work, not just at election time, and a track record of getting things done for residents, is the winning formula. Despite a strong challenge from Reform, they didn't lose a single seat.



Running Gosport Borough Council, especially as a minority party of 11 out of 28 councillors, will not be an easy job. New Leader, Zoe, has recognised that with an open letter to residents setting out the Group's priorities. You can read that [here](#). You can also follow their progress on their Facebook page [here](#). I wish all of them the best of luck.

I also want to congratulate my colleagues on Fareham Borough



Council and Hampshire County who retained their seats.

It takes courage to stand for public office especially in the current political climate so everybody who stood for election, whatever their party, whether they won or lost, deserves respect.

In Westminster the media's attention has been on a man who Keir Starmer may wish wasn't standing: Andy Burnham. The Labour Party psychodrama managed to overshadow the King's Speech, with Wes Streeting resigning to launch a leadership bid, only to pause to allow Andy Burnham the opportunity to challenge him.

It means that the country will be subjected to months of leadership speculation as rivals jostle for position. The media may love it, but as I wrote in the Daily Echo (which you can read [here](#)), instability filters down to business confidence and the financial markets which affects all of us.



The King's Speech is an important moment for the Government. Opening a new session of Parliament, it is a chance for the Prime Minister to set out their new legislative programme in a very traditional ceremony that employs all the pomp and finery that we are so good at in Britain. MPs are then given five days to debate the proposals.

In my speech, I raised the disparity between what the Government says about its ambitions for our service-men and -women and what it actually does. The truth is that Armed Forces are being asked to make cuts at a time when the world has almost never felt more unstable, meanwhile Defence Ministers dither and delay over the publication of their plans to invest in our defensive capabilities. You can read what I said [here](#) or watch a short snippet [here](#).

I also [raised](#) my disappointment that the programme was not more ambitious for our culture, media and sport sectors. I was expecting to see broader legislation to boost our multi-billion pound major events industry, as well as interventions to support increased physical activity and youth work, but they weren't there. The Government also failed to produce the ready to go ticket tout ban recently promised. Ticket touts currently rip off live music fans to the tune of £145 million a year, but disappointingly, Ministers don't seem keen to take urgent action.

Amidst the backdrop of chaos, many local people tell me how they think Kemi Badenoch is doing a great job leading the Conservative Party out of the doldrums. I was thrilled to welcome her on a visit to UK Docks in Gosport, earlier this month where we toured the business on the site and took a RIB out into the Harbour. The Opposition Leader used this backdrop to announce a new policy about using money from scrapping the Chagos Surrender Bill to fund new frigates. You can see what she said [here](#).



It's part of a wider programme for Government which you can read [here](#).

May also saw another U-Turn from the Government under Conservative pressure. The Chancellor announced she would not raise fuel duty after all. I had raised the alarm about these proposals in the House of Commons back in March, which you can watch [here](#), so I'm glad for commuters and businesses in the Gosport constituency that the raise will be reversed.

I am also hoping for the Government to think again next week when they will have the opportunity to accept our proposals to enshrine the right to a railcard for veterans in law. You can find out more and sign my petition [here](#).

There has also been a lot of other activity around the Gosport constituency this month:

I [visited](#) the 17th Century Village, Little Woodham for their annual May Day celebrations. It's a remarkable setting and with morris dancers and traditional maypole dancing in full swing, it was like a magical trip back in time.



From the past to the future, there was plenty of interest in response to video I made about a new trial hovercraft route from Lee on the Solent to Ryde.

You can watch that [here](#).

Hovertravel are trialling the route on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, and 5<sup>th</sup> September, and you can register your interest to take part [here](#).

It was a privilege to [start](#) the Gosport Rotary Club's Doughnut Dash race alongside Mayor Kirsten Bradley at a scorching Stokes Bay.



Well done to all the runners who managed to raise a lot of money for charity through their participation, as well as the support from the Alverstoke Brownies, Police Cadets and Gosport Solent Brass band. The Rotary Club are always keen to welcome new members to help support their fabulous community fundraising activities.

As ever I had a lot of fun at [this year's](#) Gosport Marine Festival and Sea Shanty Festival. Portsmouth News [billed](#) it as "the best one to-date" and I would agree. The festival goes from strength to strength and it was great to see so many young people out and about on the water as well as trying out other activities from axe throwing to wall climbing. A huge thanks to all the volunteers that made it such a cracking day - I'm already looking forward to next year.

Our coastal location is part of what makes Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head such an attractive place to live. We should remember that it comes with its risks though. Just before the late May Bank Holiday weekend I [visited](#) the Maritime and Coastguard Agency at Daedalus - a good opportunity to hear more about their vital work and meet one of the helicopter rescue teams and those who support them. It takes roughly 3,000 volunteers to operate Coastguard Rescue across the country and I want to thank all of those who give up their time to keep others safe, especially those based around the Solent.



Speaking of emergency services, I visited the lovely team at South Central Ambulance Service this month in response to constituents' concerns about response times.

You can find out more about their ongoing efforts to improve the service [here](#).

Meanwhile, I was concerned to hear that the 9A Bus service is being retired. I [wrote](#) to FirstBus as soon as I found out and I have since met with their new management team, who explained that they will be increasing the frequency of the Service 9, but have agreed to look at the 9A again and review how many constituents are disadvantaged due to these changes.

I also raised concerns with the Home Office about the plans for the next stage of Haslar Immigration Removal Centre include an extra storey that did not feature on the original plans. You can read the letter that I wrote [here](#), where I request that the planning application be submitted via Gosport Borough Council, so local residents can have more input, rather than be decided by a Minister in Whitehall.

I also raised delays to CQC registration and inspections with the interim CEO of the Care Quality Commission. These delays are affecting care homes and medical centres across the country, and I was glad to hear about plans to speed up the process.

Back in Lee on the Solent I enjoyed learning about the work of the Veterans Dementia Support Group at Court Barn. As someone who saw a close family member live with dementia I know how welcome this support is. You can find out more about the group and their activities in our area [here](#).

I caught up with the team at the Utilita Energy Hub at 67 Gosport High Street, who support residents to find the best deals and save money on their energy bills. The Hub also has a meeting room which local community groups can use free of charge, a fantastic resource right in the heart of the High Street.

I popped down to the Young Carers Hub run by Motiv8, where the young people were busy making pizzas. I heard more about how they support their families, often taking on responsibilities far beyond their years. It also gave me the chance to

catch up with the lovely Motiv8 team and hear more about the excellent work they do to support young people locally.

I spent a brilliant evening with the wonderful young people of Sea Cadets Offshore, alongside senior Royal Navy figures, at Fort Blockhouse.

The event showcased the fantastic work of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, as well as the important role of their Offshore fleet in giving young people the chance to develop confidence, teamwork, resilience and practical maritime skills.

It was especially good to hear more about their flagship, TS Royalist, following her significant refit over the winter.



I met the local Santander team of Community Bankers who operate weekly out of Gosport Museum in the wake of the branch closure. See more information about which services they offer [here](#).

I was also delighted to celebrate the opening of Tin Trousers' new site in Gosport Marina. You can find out more about this amazing growing business, which provides uniform, tailoring and dress services [here](#).

In Westminster the Culture, Media, and Sport Committee began to take evidence for its inquiry into the BBC Charter Review. It's an important moment for the broadcaster, as the Government decides what the BBC can and cannot do and what its remit is in the future. We took the views of podcaster and journalist Marina Hyde and playwright James Graham, which you can read [here](#) and watch [here](#). I know that the subject of the BBC elicits strong feelings from across the political spectrum, so if you want to keep track of our inquiry you can do so [here](#).

I am often asked for my views on news stories in the creative industries and media, and this month I was asked to respond to allegations made in a Panorama documentary about the Channel 4 reality TV programme Married at First Sight. Do programme makers have a strong enough duty of care to their subjects? Or was this kind of programme an accident waiting to happen? You can hear some of my thoughts [here](#).

I was also able to ask the former boss of Channel 4, Alex Mahon about this when she appeared in front of the DCMS select committee, which you can watch [here](#).

Ofcom is the media regulator and I was asked to be part of the scrutiny panel for the pre-appointment of its new Chair, Sir Ian Cheshire. I took the chance to ask him how well he thought Ofcom was regulating reality TV. I also wondered whether he thought they were making enough progress in their new role of ensuring the big tech companies are fulfilling their commitments in the Online Safety Act. I was

pleased to see an online suicide forum recently fined £950,000 by Ofcom, but, as I said [here](#) it was worrying that it took almost a year for them to reach this conclusion.

Finally there are a few consultations you may be interested in:

The Government consulted on changes to the SEND system and I submitted a response on behalf of parents and carers of children and young people with SEND in the Gosport Constituency. You can read that [here](#).

The Rowner Pride in Place Survey is still open for responses. The Government has given local people £20 million to spend on priorities for their community and Chairs Chris Willis and Kirsty Robertson are asking for your views. You can respond [here](#).



The local NHS Trust is consulting on how its urgent care services, like GP out-of-hours services, night nursing services and urgent treatment centres, are delivered. You can leave your views [here](#).

Please also take some time to submit a nomination to the PubAid Community Awards. You can do that [here](#).

That's it from me – go and enjoy the weekend!

Best wishes  
Caroline Dinenage

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