Welcome to October's newsletter, and what an eventful month it's been!

After months of build-up and Prime Minister Burnham's pledge to put a rocket under decades of political decisions, this week's Budget was less firework and more damp squib.

The Chancellor didn't announce a route to the 3% spending target for defence. Taxes went up again, and there was scant relief for household bills, save a £100 winter voucher for some properties. The business taxes which have contributed to a 23% rise in youth unemployment in Gosport remain. And there was nothing on welfare reform, despite a benefits bill on track to increase by tens of billions by the end of the decade.

The resulting Office for Budget Responsibility report made for sober reading; it said that, following the Budget, average household disposable income is forecast to fall by £1,050 over the next two years. With energy bills due to rise by up to 27% from January, there was little comfort for households struggling with the cost of living.

I gave my immediate thoughts on what was a deeply underwhelming Budget here.

But let's go back to the beginning of the month, it started with the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham.

Announcements from Kemi Badenoch included halving the amount employers have to pay in tax for younger workers, scrapping stamp duty entirely, and abolishing inheritance tax on family homes. You can read all of them here.

My own Conference agenda was completely altered however by the arrival of a mega-dinghy carrying around 150 migrants at Fort Blockhouse, Gosport.

Despite warnings from me, Gosport Borough Council Leader Zoe Huggins, and Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones, that it was not safe and would signal to criminal gangs that this was a viable new route, the Home Office went ahead.

I spoke to most of the media outlets on this, you can watch my conversation with GB News here.

I'm still outraged that the Home Office failed to communicate about something so impactful to my constituency. I expressed this in a letter to the Home Secretary, which you can read here. You can read the Government response here. I also raised my concerns with the Prime Minister in Parliament, you can watch that here. He suggested that this situation wouldn't be repeated, but we will wait and watch.

It has also been a busy time for the Select Committee that I Chair. We published our report into the future of the BBC which you can read here ahead of the Government setting out their plans for the new Charter.

The Government's response to our report on Protecting Built Heritage, (in which we suggest 670,000 new homes could be created by regenerating empty historic

buildings), betrayed a terrible lack of ambition. You can read it here.

We kicked off a new enquiry into tourism and heard from witnesses including The Hotel Inspector Alex Polizzi and online travel influencer VickyFlipFlop. You can keep an eye on this here.

We heard from the Chair and CEO of Ofcom, the regulator for broadcast, media, telecoms and online harms. Hear what they had to say here.

I was delighted to support The Centre for Social Justice's 'Fewer Screens, More Sport' campaign, based on their new report, 'Inactive Nation', which you can read here. It repeats many of the recommendations from our Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport Committee's 'Game On' report, which you can read here. So let's hope the Government are listening!

With Manchester City FC found guilty of 114 charges relating to financial breaches, Times Radio asked for my thoughts here. Meanwhile the new Independent Football Regulator published their eye watering State of the Game report, which revealed 94% of their football clubs are loss making. You can read it here.

I raised the ongoing issues with the Civil Service Pension Scheme in the House of Commons with new Minister Sally Jameson. You can see our exchange here.

I joined the Royal British Legion 'Credit Their Service' campaign which calls for an equalisation of veterans compensation with universal credit. You can read more about that here.

I met the team from Hampshire Police Federation who were in Parliament to talk about their very important campaign on the tragedy of officer suicide.

And I got my flu jab! As an asthmatic I know that flu can lead to serious complications like bronchitis and pneumonia, especially in older adults and those with other existing health conditions. Getting vaccinated also lowers the risk of spreading flu to family and friends too.

Anyone over 65 can sign up at https://www.hantsiow.icb.nhs.uk/winter-vaccinations.

I chaired a meeting of the Gosport Taskforce, which I set up back in 2016. The Taskforce brings together local leaders including Councils, Police and those who manage large local sites like the DIO, Home Office and Royal Navy. It's an important forum to ensure everyone is up to speed on what's going on in our community and to share information on key local issues.

I also attended a brilliant event by Kings Group Academies to better connect local businesses and schools. With almost a million young people across the UK currently not in education, employment or training, building those links, inspiring the next generation and ensuring young people leave school with the skills employers are looking for, really matters. If you are a local employer you can find out more here.

There was another stakeholder meeting at Royal Clarence Yard to hear about the Levelling Up fund and ongoing regeneration of the historic Rum Store and the £5M project to open up the waterfront footpath towards the town centre and ferry.

I also joined the official launch of the Gosport Community Hub as a Best Start Family Hub which will make it easier for families to access the advice, activities and support they need. Find out more about this here.

At The Alverbank I met Abby and her team to discuss their exciting ambition to create more career opportunities for local young people in the hospitality sector. I also met their new Portsmouth News Apprentice of the Year, Daisy!

I spoke to some very little students at Woodcote Primary School about online safety, and some older ones at UTC Portsmouth about my journey into politics.

To mark Community Transport Week, I met with the team at Community First Gosport to hear about the vital role their mini bus plays in helping residents stay independent and connected.

I attended the Five Towers Residents Association AGM alongside Cllr Lesley Meenaghan. It was a valuable opportunity to update everyone on my work challenging the Home Office over the recent small boat landings.

I caught up with Dr Leo Burtin from Gosport Routes to hear about the plans to bring more arts and cultural investment and opportunities to our town.

I met with Kerry Owen, Chief Inspector for Gosport and Fareham, to discuss local policing issues.

I popped along to the grand opening of The Den Training Centre, the new home of Jessie Leigh Dance & Cheer Academy, Wild Wonderland, and two brand-new ventures, Jessie Leigh Gymnastics and The Hunting Grounds Gym.

I networked with many of the brilliant organisations providing support, services and activities for older residents across our community at INFOFest. Thank you to Gosport Older Persons Forum for arranging that one!

And met St Vincent College leadership team for an update on some exciting developments at the college.

Finally there are a few things I wanted to bring to your attention:

This month saw the launch of England's first national fostering campaign. Many people rule themselves out before they've even asked the question but more people can foster than you might realise. You can find out more at fostering.campaign.gov.uk.

You have less than 24 hours to vote in my Pub of the Year competition. The finalists are The Carisbrooke Arms, The Golden Bowler, The White Horse, The Windsor Castle, and The Queen's Head. Cast your vote now here.

My annual Volunteers Reception in Parliament is fast-approaching and I'm looking for your nominations for the organisations or individuals who make a difference to your life, family or neighbourhood! Nominate here.

And Gosport Conservatives are surveying residents in Hardway. This is your chance to have your views represented in local politics. You can take part here.

That's all for this month, and as ever, if you have a question or query for me and my team, please get in touch at caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk

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