

Caroline Dinenage

MY ROUND UP OF THE YEAR IN
GOSPORT & WESTMINSTER

2013

featuring...

186 votes in Parliament

78 oral and written questions

37 Parliamentary debates

133 constituency events

1 kiss from Peppa Pig!

Happy New Year! Here's to a successful 2014!

2013 was a memorable year for many reasons. We welcomed the future King of England into the world, Andy Murray became the first British man to win Wimbledon in 77 years & we even had a hot summer! On a more poignant note, we also paid our respects to political icons, Margaret Thatcher & Nelson Mandela.

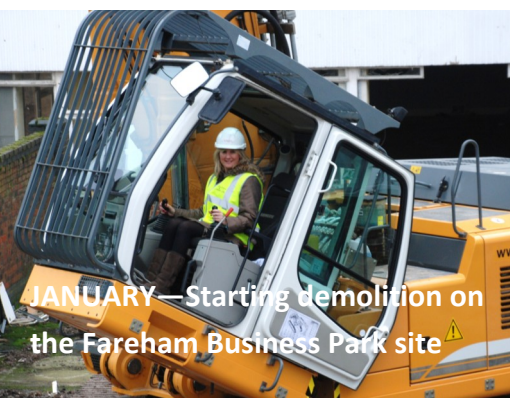
The Government continued to demonstrate its commitment to hardworking people & continues to tackle Britain's problems head on. There is still more to do but steady progress has been made towards our long term economic plan. More on that later, first let's take a quick look at some of my highlights of the year...

One of my New Year's resolutions was to do more to **help boost the profile and fortunes of small businesses** both locally and nationally. I got out and about in the Gosport constituency to visit local firms and also attended a number of business forums. As a small business owner myself, I am always keen to fight the corner of small enterprises and took the opportunity to do just that during a number of Westminster debates. Being appointed **Small Business Ambassador for the South** by the Prime Minister has enabled me to get even more involved in the campaign which got off to a fantastic start with the first Small Business Saturday generating around £468 million for companies across the country.

Regeneration at the former Daedalus airfield site continues to be a key priority and I made a successful deputation to Fareham Borough Council, to support their bid for £8 million Government funding for a new hangar, resurfacing the runway and constructing a new business innovation centre. 2014 will see the launch of Fareham College's hotly anticipated CEMAST Skills Centre at the site. Sparking the ambition of young people is key to stimulating growth, and Lord Heseltine saw how his recommendation of promoting linkages between schools and businesses has been implemented in Gosport when he visited Brune Park School.

It was a **good year for local development** as the multi-million pound regeneration of the Rowner Estate continued apace. The completion of a brand new Tesco superstore marked a significant milestone in the project which is helping the local community to realise a vision of heightened opportunities.

Gosport had the **highest number of apprenticeship starts in Hampshire last year**. The most popular sector was Engineering & Advanced Technology, demonstrating the importance of investment from companies such as QinetiQ and Vector Aerospace. Continuing the good news, **unemployment in the Gosport constituency decreased month-on-month in 2013**, and is now down to just 2.4% compared to a national average of 3.9%. There is still more to be done, but this data shows that our local economy is turning a corner.



JANUARY—Starting demolition on the Fareham Business Park site



FEBRUARY— Opening Kitchenworx on Stoke Road



MARCH—With former Minister for Transport, Norman Baker MP



APRIL—Having a go at bowling at the Gosport Bowling Club



MAY—Opening the BioWare garden at Brockhams Pre-School



JUNE—With the Prime Minister & other Small Business Ambassadors

To really get the Gosport area booming, tackling local road congestion is essential, which is why I am pleased with the progress that was made last year. Not only did Hampshire County Council hold a **public consultation on the future of local road networks**, I welcomed then Transport Minister, Norman Baker MP, and non-other than the Secretary of State for Transport himself, Patrick McLoughlin MP, to Gosport & Stubbington. Fingers crossed for further developments in 2014, as I will continue to mount pressure on my Ministerial colleagues & local fund holders to assist us in overcoming this longstanding problem.

High up on my agenda for 2013 was the issue of adult literacy and numeracy, a campaign which gathered momentum throughout the year and culminated in **holding a debate in the Chamber of the House of Commons**. I have now been asked to establish an All Party Parliamentary Group for Numeracy to raise awareness of the importance of basic maths skills.

It's always a pleasure to **welcome people from Gosport to Parliament**— last year a number of schools paid visits to Westminster and took the opportunity to quiz me about my life as an MP. My annual Volunteer's Reception also brought some friendly local faces to Parliament and gave me an invaluable opportunity to thank those who work hard to give back to the Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington & Hill Head community.

My commitment to **standing up for our Armed Forces community** remained a priority, particularly at the end of the year when BAE announced the cessation of shipbuilding in Portsmouth. I spoke up on this issue during a number of parliamentary debates & departmental questions and also welcomed Defence Minister, Anna Soubry MP, to Gosport to show her some of our military sites. Having campaigned relentlessly to secure the **Arctic Star medal for veterans of the Arctic Convoy**, I was thrilled that the awards were distributed to veterans and widows last year. The true hero of the campaign was Eddie Grenfell who sadly past away in the summer, but not before he received the medal he spent so many years working towards.

A year on from the London Olympics, I became a Parliamentary Sports Champion and endeavoured to keep up the momentum of Britain's spectacular sporting ambition locally, **visiting a number of sporting clubs**. Always keen to try out new things, I launched Gosport Bowling Club's 2013 season and even had a go at wheelchair laser tag with GADSAD! Good news came to Bay House School & Bridgemary Community College, both of which have been granted funding for exciting new sports facilities whilst local sailing hero, Alex Thomson, finished 3rd in the Vendee Globe.

I **pledged my support to a number of health campaigns in 2013**, including the fantastic local MEND lifestyle programme to tackle obesity in children. At the end of the year, welcome news came from NHS England, which announced that the Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group will receive the largest budget increase in the Thames Valley region between 2014 and 2017.



JULY—Meeting Peppa Pig at Alverstone Infant School's Fayre



AUGUST—Trying out wheelchair laser tag with GADSAD



SEPTEMBER—With Ian Potter, head teacher at Bay House, on the site of the new Sports Hall



OCTOBER—Opening the revamped Alverstone Post Office



NOVEMBER—Discussing transport plans with Transport Secretary and Cllr Woodward



DECEMBER—Announcing the winner of my Christmas card competition

From attending hundreds of local events to holding surgeries right across the constituency, I have endeavoured to give our local community as much help and support as I possibly can. I've judged cake competitions, awarded gymnastic certificates and even got a kiss from Peppa Pig! I've spoken on issues which really matter to my constituents in numerous Parliamentary debates and have raised key concerns with government departments. I even took the opportunity to invite the Prime Minister to Gosport during PMQs—here's hoping he'll take me up on my offer soon!

2013 has been a fantastic year in our community, in the UK and across the globe. While we've faced difficult economic times and international instability, considerable progress has been made in rebuilding Britain. There's lots more still to do, but below is my pick of the Government's top achievements in the past year.

Wishing you and your families a happy, healthy & successful 2014.

Caroline

CAROLINE'S TOP TEN GOVERNMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1. Cutting the deficit by £13 billion** – down by 25% since we came to office, and working on a strong long-term economic plan.
- 2. Making welfare fairer** – capping benefits to £26,000 so that no one will receive more in welfare than the average family earns by going out to work and introducing the Universal Credit system to ensure that it always pays to work.
- 3. Cutting income tax bills for 25 million workers** – raising the threshold at which people start paying tax to £10,000 meaning that 2 million of the lowest paid will be lifted out of tax altogether.
- 4. Improving schools** – 1,000 new Academies mean that 2,976 schools now have the benefits of Academy status and targeting Pupil Premium money at disadvantaged students who need it most.
- 5. Bringing immigration under control** – capping immigration from outside the EU, limiting EU immigrants access to public services, reforming student visas and introducing compulsory English language tests. Net immigration has been cut by a third since the 2010 election.
- 6. Supporting small businesses** – from April 2014 businesses and charities will receive £2,000 Employment Allowance per year towards their employer National Insurance contributions bill and the doubling of small business rate relief will be extended until April 2015.
- 7. Tackling crime** – recorded crime has dropped by 10% nationally and in Hampshire, crime rates are down 22%.
- 8. More people in work than ever before** – there are over 1 million more people in work than before the 2010 election. The Office for Budget Responsibility has revised up its prediction of employment in 2014, estimating that 600,000 jobs will be created.
- 9. Supporting pensioners** – guaranteeing rises in the Basic State Pension of the higher of earnings, prices or 2.5 per cent, making the average pensioner £12,000 better off over the course of their retirement.
- 10. Delivering the biggest ever boost to apprenticeships** – nearly 860,000 people were on an apprenticeship scheme in 2012/2013.