



# Caroline Dinenage

**MP for Gosport,  
Lee-on-the-Solent,  
Stubbington and  
Hill Head**



*With Christmas card competition entrants and the Mayor of Gosport, Cllr John Beavis*

It's hard to believe that we have come to the end of 2013. December finished off a very busy year, with lots of local events to get me in the Christmas spirit...

I kicked off the month by announcing the winner of my Christmas card competition. Having received over 100 entries, I presented Lili Kurzfeld of Haselworth Primary School with first prize. Gosport's Royal Mail Delivery Centre work hard to deliver our Christmas cards and gifts, so I paid them an early morning visit to express my thanks.

Meanwhile, the Alverstoke Christmas Tree Festival was utterly charming and an event my children particularly enjoyed. The switch on of the Christmas lights in Stubbington village was also buzzing with festive spirit and busier than ever. I was on hand to open the Christmas Bazaar held by the local branch of the MS Society, which benefited from many kind donations from the local community.



*At Gosport's Royal Mail Delivery Centre*

As local readers will know, BAE's recent announcement about the termination of shipbuilding in Portsmouth sent shock waves around the area. In December I met with BAE Systems bosses, as well as Minister for Business and Enterprise, Michael Fallon MP, to discuss progress on plans to mitigate against job losses. I also contributed to a parliamentary debate on the future of Royal Navy ships, urging the Government to do all it can to avoid any gaps in re-fit & ship maintenance work at the Dockyard.

With 1/5 of the land in Gosport Borough still owned by the MoD, I met with Dr Andrew Murrison MP, the Minister responsible for defence infrastructure, to tell him about some exciting proposals for disused land which is currently locked against redevelopment.

After months of planning, Small Business Saturday took place at the beginning of the month and I visited a number of our excellent independent retailers across the area that day to finish off my Christmas shopping. Nationally, the campaign generated approximately £468 million - let's hope it's an idea that goes from strength to strength.



*At Leon's Fruit and Veg Stall on Small Business Saturday*

Meanwhile, the Autumn Statement brought welcome news for small businesses, as the Chancellor announced a package which includes a 2% cap on business rate increases as well as help for our high streets with a business rate discount of up to £1000 for retail premises. These measures will stimulate growth as small businesses have more capital to reinvest.

In Gosport, SIC Digital – the first beneficiary of the Gosport Town Team’s Empty Unit Support Scheme – has opened up shop at 67 High Street, giving a formerly derelict premises a brand new lease of life.

We also had positive news from the National Apprenticeship Service which released figures showing that 2100 individuals began an apprenticeship in 2012/13—the highest number in Hampshire. Engineering and manufacturing technologies were the most popular sectors, thanks to investment from companies such as Network Rail, EDF and QinetiQ.

Maintaining the dialogue between business and politics, I co-hosted an event with the Federation of Small Businesses which gave their local representatives the opportunity to discuss issues with MPs from our region. I also met with Kris Hopkins MP, the new Minister for local growth, and invited him to visit Gosport to discuss the barriers to growth in our area, such as our terrible road congestion, and ask him for help with our plans to overcome them.

The newly announced City Deal for Portsmouth and Southampton could mean extra investment in Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington & Hill Head. Following a briefing by the Minister responsible for City Deals, Greg Clarke MP, I will be holding further meetings with Ministers and keeping up the pressure to ensure that Gosport benefits from this programme.

St John’s Primary School joined me in Westminster as we delivered their ‘Send My Friend to School’ petition to 10 Downing Street. It’s lovely to know that children in Gosport are passionate about spreading the benefits of education across the world.



With St. John’s Primary School at No 10



With members of The Gosport Men’s Shed

Back on the south coast, I met with Cllr Peter Edgar, who holds the education portfolio at Hampshire County Council, to discuss the progress of schools in our area. It’s great to hear that 83% of Hampshire’s schools have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. I also attended meetings to discuss provisions for local troubled families with my colleagues from the Borough and County Councils.

Visiting The Gosport Men’s Shed at Fort Brockhurst was a pleasure as always—this fantastic initiative gives older men a renewed sense of purpose, comradeship and brand new hobbies.

Another inspiring local man is sailing hero Alex Thomson who updated me on his business plans for the future – having already set some tremendous records he continues to put Gosport's marine scene on the map! GoShawk Gymnastics and Trampolining club also have some talented young athletes, and I was delighted to view a demonstration and hand out prizes at their recent ceremony - fortunately with my feet firmly on the ground!

After all that it was a great relief to enjoy a restful and happy Christmas at home with my family & friends - despite the horrendous weather conditions! All that remains is to thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter over the past twelve months and to wish you a very Happy New Year.

Best wishes

*Caroline*

*(P.S. Please forward on my newsletter to friends and neighbours!)*

## GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me on any issue, or to find out when my next surgery is. I’m always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben for my constituents. Please contact my office at least three months in advance to make sure you get a place - the tours are very popular!

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