

Caroline Dinenage

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Your local MP reporting back from Westminster



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

It's been as busy as ever in Gosport and Westminster at the start of the new year.

You will all know how I am committed to protecting our community's resources. Following a review of vascular surgery in the region, I'm keen to ensure that surgeons stay at QA. We were promised a "super hospital" at QA when our much loved Haslar Hospital closed, so it's imperative that resources don't go to Southampton. I encourage constituents to participate in the forthcoming vascular surgery consultation and will meet with QA surgeons later this week.

The recent speculation surrounding the loss of 1,500 shipbuilding jobs at BAE in Portsmouth was of great concern, so I held urgent meetings with both BAE bosses and Defence Minister Peter Luff. While I was pleased to hear that the headlines are largely unfounded for now, I will keep fighting to protect vital local jobs.

And local jobs are precisely what've been threatened in the fiasco at the Port of Southampton, where Marine Management Organisation failings & the meddling of commercial rivals has stopped expansion for over 4 years. I took part in a debate and lobbied Ministers in Parliament for swift action to allow the much-needed private sector investment in ship capacity at the Port to go ahead.

Our High Street is also ripe for investment. The thriving market is a great example of how vibrant the whole area could be. I campaigned in Parliament for Gosport to be a pilot town to trial the Portas' proposals for reinvigorating high streets, and met with Communities Minister Grant Shapps to discuss this. Never one to waste an opportunity, I also used the debate to register my objection to the potential introduction of car parking charges in Stubbington & to draw Ministers attention to the shocking state of Gosport's Post Office!

This month I also met with the Supporters Trust in their efforts to save Pompey. As a life-long supporter of the troubled Football Club, I know how important it is to the local community, so at a crucial meeting last week we discussed how to help secure its long-term future.

There were also some vital meetings in Westminster this month. As an inaugural member of the Parliamentary Group on Body Image, I quizzed representatives from the diet and cosmetic surgery industries on their role in creating body image anxiety. With so many people, at increasingly young ages, with an unhealthy attitude to eating and crippled by low self-esteem, these industries need to take responsibility for the images they promote.



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With the Headteacher at Lord Wilson School

transition.

Finally, there was just time to lend my support to the Trade Union Reform Campaign. This group is tackling the worrying use of taxpayers' money to fund union activities – paying teachers not to teach, and nurses not to nurse! While I support the valuable work our unions do, it cannot come at the expense of frontline services - to the tune of £137 million per year.

Back in Hampshire, the importance of these frontline services was clear at the Lord Wilson School. This inspiring special school is delivering a first-rate education to children with behavioural difficulties – 74% of whom come from Gosport. Despite the challenges they face, students are leaving fully prepared for employment or further training.

I was also impressed on my visit to the Two Saints organisation, where I witnessed how their residential support and training transforms the lives of many, including those facing homelessness and overcoming substance addiction.



Visiting the Two Saints organisation

Finally, another inspiring project will hit Gosport this year, as the National Citizenship Service is rolled out across the area. This fantastic initiative gives Year-11 students from all different backgrounds the opportunity to take on new challenges and help their community. NCS reps will be visiting local schools soon – so encourage any students you know to sign up.

Best wishes,

Caroline



With the Education Business Partnership—who will run the NCS in Gosport

GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me on any issue, or to find out when my next surgery is. It is also possible to come up to Parliament to have an official tour. I'm always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben for my constituents. Just please contact my office to book at least two months in advance to make sure you get a place - the tours are very popular!

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