



# Caroline Dinenage

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



*HMS Sultan was top of the agenda at my meeting with the Chancellor*

This month, the Government announced its intention to sell three important plots of land in the Gosport constituency: the former Haslar Immigration Centre, Fort Blockhouse and HMS Sultan.

Locally, much of our public land is frustratingly underused to the detriment of our economic growth. Therefore, I am cautiously optimistic about the disposal of Haslar IRC & Fort Blockhouse, super pieces of waterfront real estate in which we are already receiving interest from business. HMS Sultan is different – this Ofsted outstanding-rated training establishment is an asset to the local community, the Royal Navy and the MoD & the financial case for moving it is very unconvincing. I successfully fought against moving it to South Wales 6 years ago under plans drawn up by the last Labour Government, and I still firmly believe it must be retained.

To make this case at the highest levels, this month I met with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Government's Solent Local Growth Champion, Jo Johnson MP and the First Sea Lord.

Alongside these high-level meetings, I have established a taskforce of local experts to work out how best to retain and optimise the site. We held our first meeting in November and look forward to the next meeting where we will be joined by MOD officials to quiz them on the rationale behind the disposal plans and the next steps .

The Chancellor issued his Autumn Statement this month. I was pleased to see prioritisation of investment in infrastructure to boost productivity. £683 million was announced with individual allocations to be confirmed shortly – I earnestly await news about whether the Stubbington Bypass will be funded as part of this and earlier this month I met with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to lobby him one final time!

Back in the constituency, I hosted Gosport's very first Enterprise Fair, in partnership with the Solent LEP and X-Forces. The event was a massive success. I had wonderful feedback from guests about how beneficial they found the networking session and speeches from great local business owners including Clipper's Sir Robin Knox Johnson and James Baggott from automotive PR company, Blackball Media.

Also on the agenda were meetings with the CEO of Business South, Sally Thompson regarding her organisation's work in our local area. I also met the MD of big local employer, Vector Aerospace, who updated me on the state-of-play at Fleetlands.

In Westminster I met the new interim Chief Executive and Chair of Southern Health, Alan Yates and Julie Dawes. I was pleased to hear that in the wake of all the high profile issues with the Trust earlier this year, they have been consulting families of patients on how best to improve standards of care. As a result of their work, the Care Quality Commission has officially recognised improvements.



*With the speakers at Gosport's very first Enterprise Fair*



*Presenting Bay House School with their prestigious British Council award*

In education news, during Parliament Week, I welcomed pupils from Brune Park to Parliament for a tour and Q&A session. The same evening, I presented Bay House School with a prestigious British Council award in recognition of the school's leading role in developing a global approach to education. I visited Haselworth Primary to celebrate recent successes: their SATS results for progress are the 3rd best in Hampshire and they are among the top 10% nationally for reading and writing. Finally, I had a great time meeting some of the Early Years students and staff at Fareham College and Kidz Inc Nursery.



Visiting Kidz Inc Nursery at Fareham College

I met two amazing young people from our area – Carrienne Williams and Connor Steele - at the Disability 'Can Do' event in Parliament. This scheme offers exciting opportunities for disabled people aged 10-35 to volunteer in their community.

I presented Gosport's wonderful Motiv8 with the 'Best Community Group' award at the Kids Count UK Inspiration Awards in Parliament. This group makes such an enormous contribution to the lives of the young people in our area.

Also in Parliament, I joined Stubbington resident Claire Jeffries, who was awarded Best Care by a Physiotherapist in the nationwide Patients' Choice Awards. Claire was also part of the award winning team from Queen Alexandra Hospital who won the award for Best AS Clinic.

Back at home, I took a tour of Orchard House, a housing scheme for adults with Autism near Stokes Bay. It was a pleasure to meet the tenants and wonderful staff who help support them.

More fantastic new venues opened at Royal Clarence Yard this month. The Victualler Harbourside is a super bar and restaurant in the old bakery. The Flour Mill Emporium is open until Christmas, selling a wonderful selection of gifts and crafts, with local artists on hand, in this stunning historic setting.

I was pleased to attend Lee Residents' Association Christmas Social and I look forward to more Christmassy events in the Gosport area next month! You can check out some of the events happening near you on the newly launched [Gosport Info](#) website.

I proudly attended our local Remembrance Day service this month, which was as beautiful and poignant as ever, with wonderful contributions from local young cadets. A few days previously, I joined service personnel from HMS Sultan selling poppies in London to raise money for the Royal British Legion. This worthy cause reminds us of

the huge sacrifices our Armed Forces have made to keep us safe.

Looking forward to next month, 3<sup>rd</sup> December is Small Business Saturday. I will be touring a number of our small businesses and encouraging people to "shop small"!

And spare a thought for Gosport's own Alex Thomson, still in with a shot of winning the Vendee Globe round-the-world sailing race. His exceptional achievement is a great illustration of the fantastic maritime culture and talent in our area. You can watch his progress [here](#).

**Best wishes**

*Caroline*



At Royal Clarence Yard's Flour Mill Emporium launch

## 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 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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