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As we approach the end of another summer. I hope that everyone has managed to enjoy the season safely with their families and share time with friends (at a social distance!) Many have enjoyed the perks of [Eat Out To Help Out](#) on Mondays to Wednesdays throughout the month and the [reopening of certain businesses from August 15th](#), including bowling alleys, casinos and ice rinks.



As more businesses were able to reopen their doors, I myself had the honour of re-opening two businesses in our constituency - [Lee Fruit and Veg's](#) brand new, larger store on Lee on the Solent High Street and [The Anglesey Hotel's newly refurbished Bar and Restaurant](#) on Crescent Road in Alverstoke.

Ray Bezani - owner of The Anglesey - had taken advantage of [the government's Bounce Back Loan](#) during the period of closure to make stylish changes to his bar and restaurant, creating lots of work for local businesses along the way and helping support the Gosport economy. In fact, I was pleased to hear that over £25.5 million has so far been given to Gosport Constituency based businesses through Bounce Back Loans, £13 million to Gosport, Hill Head, Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent businesses through business grants and £9.8 million for those who are self-employed seeking support.

I don't think I had fully appreciated what a lifeline some of the measures have been for our business community. I have been truly touched and overwhelmed by the messages of thanks that they have asked me to pass on to the Prime Minister and his team on my visits over the last month or so.

It has been great to see the real, tangible benefits that this money has brought to the local economy and entrepreneurs. Support is still available to businesses either through the government, Gosport Borough Council and/or the Solent LEP.

Government Support

Gosport Borough Council Support

Solent LEP Support

I myself was delighted to hear that [135 'at risk' grassroots music venues had been saved](#) through the first tranche of the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund which I helped secure as Minister of State for Digital and Culture. I shall be continuing to work with entrepreneurs, artists and venues as we fight this pandemic together.

Supporting our local shops has never been so important as they face the financial implications of COVID-19. While our local retailers and high street benefited from a range of support, from government grants, to business rates relief and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, footfall has still not reached pre-pandemic levels.

In my last newsletter I mentioned that I have been out and about talking to our local shop owners see how they are coping at this time and encouraging them to sign up to the [UK Best Small Shop competition](#) which closes September 1st.

This month, I have been encouraging constituents to #ShopLocal to support our local retailers and their workforce. Our high streets are at the heart of our community and it is important to continue to support Gosport businesses who are central to this.



This month we also took time to remember the sacrifices made by those in the Far East during WWII. On August 15th the nation fell silent to honour VJ Day and those who fought in what is sometimes called the 'forgotten victory'. This can never be the case and I was deeply moved to remember these sacrifices - helped by the fantastic team at Lee-on-the-Solent Victory Festival who staged an excellent virtual commemorative event.

Bad news this month as the Hampshire County Council Libraries review concluded that two of our local libraries, Lee and Elson, are no longer financially viable, given the footfall. This was a very disappointing decision, as, like so many other local residents, I had written to Sean Woodward, who leads on Libraries at Hampshire Council, urging them to look at other ways of attracting local footfall and saving money. Happily there are plans afoot to look at how the local community can step in to take over these sites. I'm speaking to those involved and will report back when more progress has been made.

As summer ends, a new academic year begins and children across the constituency will be going back to full-time education following the pandemic.

I know many constituents shared my concerns about the A Levels algorithm and subsequent changes to the marking system, meaning that pupils will either receive their teacher-assessed grades or moderated grade based on which is higher. Ultimately, I am pleased that the Education Secretary listened to the public, education sector and Members of Parliament to ensure that pupils got the results that they deserved.

[Evidence shows](#) that the rate of transmission between children is low and the consensus from the

Chief Medical Officers is that children should return to full-time education. Schools will be following COVID-19 guidance to prevent the transmission of the virus between pupils and teachers, as well as having a range of measures from home testing kits to teaching 'bubbles'. Following the [recommendations from the World Health Organisations](#), schools also have the discretion to decide whether pupils from Year 7 should wear face coverings in school.

I have been contacted by parents who are rightly concerned about lost teaching time. As a parent myself, I share their desire to get our local school children back on track. From the [£1 billion COVID 'catch up' fund](#), to [£8 million for pupils and students well-being](#) and [£9 million for Early Years](#) language support, I am pleased to see that funds are being made available to ensure that teachers have the support and tools they need to make up for lost time.

Find out more about what pupils will expect going back to school, changes in curriculum and COVID-19 safeguards below.

Going Back To School Guidance



Also coming up this September, the Parliamentary Taxi and Private Hire Awards 2020 awards are now open. Last year, Gosport's very own [Buster Pellatt was named national runner up in these prestigious awards!](#)

If you know a taxi driver who deserves recognition for going the extra mile to assist passengers, being the friendliest in town or helping organise local fundraising in the Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington or Hill Head area, then please nominate them below before September 20th.

Nominate Your Favourite Constituent Cabbie

Having adapted to the current climate, both the Great British September Clean and Gosport Heritage Open Days are going ahead!

You can join the Great British September Clean and become a #LitterHero by cleaning up our community 11th to 27th September.

Join The Great British September Clean

Bookings are also now open for a range of in-person and virtual events that celebrate our heritage and history on the Gosport peninsula.

Have a look online at what you can take part in to learn more about our past and how it shaped our community between September 11th to 20th.



Gosport Heritage Open Days



As ever, please do get in touch if you have an queries at caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk.



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