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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021

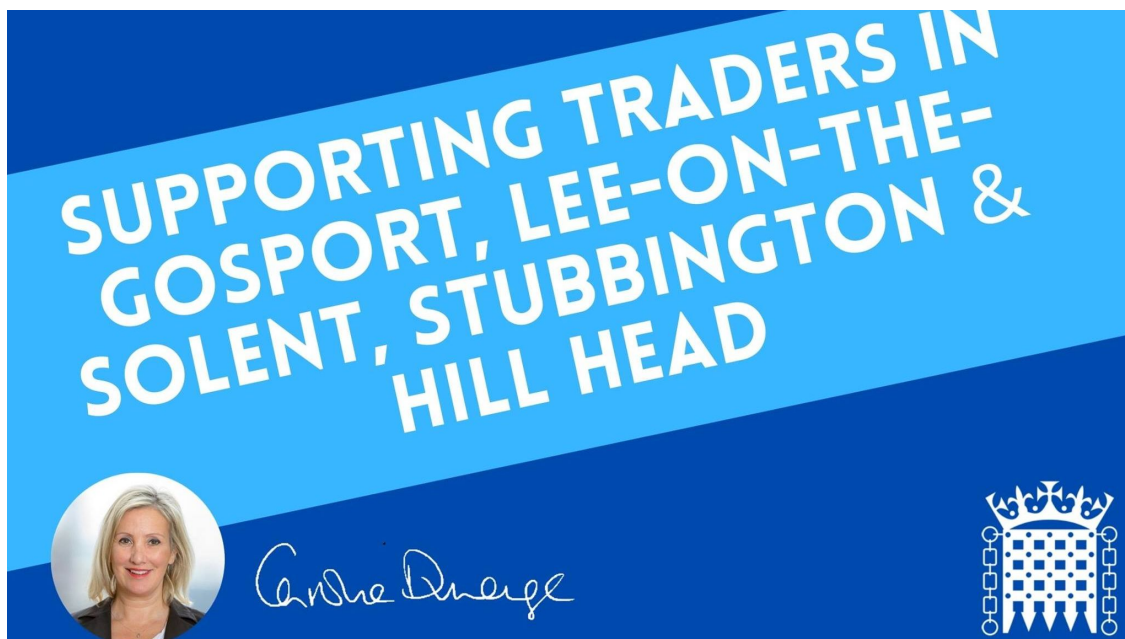
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A new year and not quite the new start that we all wanted for 2021. Due to the new COVID-19 variant - which spreads 50-70% faster than the original strain - we are back in another national lockdown to protect our vulnerable residents and the NHS. This month we have seen record numbers of COVID patients in our hospitals, our incredible NHS staff working under intense pressure and the heart-breaking milestone of 100,000 COVID-19 deaths.

As information comes thick and fast my team and I are keeping on top of it. Keep an eye out on [my website](#) for up to date info and my [Facebook page](#) for regular COVID-19 video updates.

Unfortunately, schools - apart from early years and for vulnerable students and children of critical workers - will remain closed until March 8th at the earliest. I have been in contact with all local schools, colleges and early years settings to discuss concerns and have met with all the Education Ministers and Hampshire County Council to discuss these challenges. I will continue to ensure that the concerns of local schools, students and parents are heard by the Department of Education. As a consequence of this decision, SATS, GCSE, AS and A levels are not going ahead as planned this summer. A [consultation on exams](#) and how to reflect students' grades in the fairest way has now closed and the response will be published shortly.



Clearly many businesses have really struggled in recent month. I have contacted local businesses, including pubs and restaurants, to signpost the [extra £4.6 billion](#) in financial support that was made available by the government at the beginning of the month.

This month the government also expanded the eligibility for the [Kickstart Scheme](#) - which has already created 120,000 work placements - to [ensure employers of all sizes can benefit](#). The scheme fully funds 25 hours of work, on National Minimum or Living Wage, for someone aged 16-24 on Universal Credit. On top of this, a new [£1000 cash boost](#) is available for business who hire trainees and offer them a opportunity to develop their skills and CV.

As part of the #PlanForJobs, the [Skills for Jobs White Paper has proposed pioneering reforms](#), including enshrining the Lifetime Skills Guarantee - offering adults the chance to take a fully funded A-level equivalent course - and transforming post-16 education. If you are looking to build your skills, why not set aside time for [An Hour To Skill](#), with free courses from digital design to coding.

You can continue to support local businesses, restaurants and pubs running online deliveries or click and collect services by joining my Facebook Group.

Support For Businesses

Supporting Local Businesses Facebook Group

Further funding has also been made available for football clubs. I reached out to our very own

'Boro' - Gosport Borough FC - who sadly have been unable to play a match since last October, as they are eligible for up to £27,000 through the [Sports Winter Survival Package](#). Local sports clubs and organisations can also apply for grant funding through the [Return To Play](#).

In my role as Minister of State for Culture I helped secure a £1.57 billion [Cultural Recovery Fund](#), which many local organisations have already benefited from such as Fort Brockhurst and The Kings Theatre. Earlier in the month I encouraged more of our community heritage and cultural institutions to apply for the [Second Round](#) of funding that closed on January 26th.

I also joined 'Any Questions' on Radio 4 to answer listeners queries on everything from the EU's position on COVID-19 vaccines to the policing of the pandemic.

Listen To Radio 4 'Any Questions'



Support has been extended for victims of domestic abuse as the ['Ask For ANI'](#) scheme has been launched. If you ask for Ani (pronounced Annie) at a Boots store or pharmacist they will take you to a safe pace.

I am encouraging local pharmacists across the Gosport Constituency to [sign up](#) to the scheme to help our vulnerable residents. Victims are always allowed to leave their home during a national lockdown.

The light at the end of the tunnel looks a little brighter as we enter February, with the remarkable progress of our vaccination programme. At the time of writing over 9.7 million vaccinations have been given, 9/10 of over 80s and 1/2 of over 70s have received at least one jab and all care homes across the UK have been offered it. This has been an incredible joint effort, from the Vaccine Taskforce, led by Kate Bingham and her team of private sector experts and civil servants, to the NHS staff, volunteers and pharmacists at the 'sharp end' and the political leadership of Minister Nadhim Zahawi. Thanks to this, the UK is third in the world for vaccinations per capita. We remain on track to vaccinate the top 4 priority groups (who represent 88% of those who have tragically lost their lives to COVID-19) by mid February.

I am reminded of the huge pressure last summer from the Labour Party and some journalists, for the UK to join the EU Vaccine programme, how one shadow minister described the Government as “dumber and dumber” for going it alone. When I receive weekly reports of the positive and potentially life saving local progress on this rollout, I am glad that our leaders didn’t follow this advice. The key thing is that we are in a vaccine race, but not with other countries, with this perilous virus that has taken so much from us. That's why the Government has created a ['New Variant Assessment Platform'](#) to work with countries across the globe and WHO on new variants.

When it comes to the vaccine, you may receive a letter from the national booking system offering you an appointment at one of the big regional vaccination centres, however your GP will also contact you directly offering you a local appointment. You can accept either one of these, whatever suits. If you have trouble getting to a local appointment [you can get help](#) - or if necessary you can arrange for a home visit.

Remember to also remain vigilant against increasingly clever and realistic scams. The NHS will never:

- ⊖ Ask for your bank details
- ⊖ Ask for payment
- ⊖ Arrive unannounced at your home
- ⊖ Ask for personal documents to prove your identity

Government Counter Fraud Function

GOV.UK/coronavirus

NHS Counter Fraud Authority

BE ALERT TO VACCINE FRAUD

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

PEOPLE ARE WARNED TO BE ALERT TO THESE SCAMS

The **NHS** will:

- ⊖ NEVER ask for payment - the vaccine is free
- ⊖ NEVER ask for your bank details
- ⊖ NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- ⊖ NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport

NHS: We have identified that you are eligible to apply for your vaccine. For more information and to apply, follow here: [uk.application-forms.com](#)

FAKE

Our armed forces have really stepped up to the plate to assist this national effort, including deploying 5,300 personnel in the UK and abroad to fight COVID-19. Locally, I caught up with Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan John Voyce and Commodore Jeremy Bailey, Portsmouth Royal Navy Base Commander, to hear how they are operating during restrictions.

I also spoke to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Chief Fire Officer, Neil Oden, about the vital support our firefighters are providing to essential services, such as ambulances, during this time.

Entering the new year I have continued to raise concerns about housing numbers, given that our constituency is 72% built on in comparison to the 6% national average. I met again with Gosport Borough Council following numerous consultations and meetings with Housing Ministers.

I will be meeting again with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to make the case for not developing on our precious green spaces.



I joined Jo's Trust for Cervical Cancer Prevention Week for their [#SmearForSmear](#) campaign to help raise awareness about cervical cancer screening.

99.8% of cervical cancers cases in the UK are preventable, yet more than 2 women die every day from the disease. I know residents will have concerns about appointments during COVID-19 so check out Jo's Trust for more information: <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/>

I also lit a candle in my window on January 27th to mark [Holocaust Memorial Day](#), honouring the 6 million that lost their lives to hatred and prejudice during this bleak period of history. It reminds us that we must continue to fight injustice, bigotry and discrimination that still blights the world today.

Parliament has been in full swing this month, despite the challenges of remote working. We have seen the [Mental Health Act White Paper](#) published - delivering on the key manifesto promise to reform the Mental Health Act - and a [new independent review into Children's Social Care](#) to give cared-for children a better start in life and brighter future. In my role as Minister for Digital and Culture I gave [evidence to the Women & Equalities Select Committee enquiry](#) on body image.

Delivering on another key manifesto promise to make our streets safer, the government has announced that, as a result of our manifesto commitment to recruit 20,000 new police officers by 2023, so far over 6,620 new recruits have joined the force. Locally, that is [over 220 new recruits](#) for the Hampshire Constabulary, many of whom are already hard at work keeping our streets safer. On top of this, a [new £148 million](#) - the largest investment in drug treatment and support - been invested to cut crime and tackle misuse at the source.

The police have been helping ensure our community are COVID-19 compliant. The Home

Secretary has been clear that the police can take action - this includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines.

- A Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400
- If you hold, or are involved in holding, an illegal gathering of over 30 people, the police can issue fines of £10,000

I have been told that locally the number of enforcement notices issued has increased significantly over the last few weeks, exceeding the previous peak during the November restrictions. I also understand there have now been over 30,000 fines handed out for regulation breaches.



The IFA2 Interconnector is now at full capacity for the very first time since I went to the launch of the site at Daedalus with the then [Energy Minister, Kwasi Kwarteng \(now Business Secretary\), back in October](#). This National Grid facility at the Solent Enterprise Zone has the power to supply 1 million homes with clean energy. The site also has special modifications made from cutting-edge technology to meet Fareham Borough Council's strict requirements to minimise noise, emissions and disruptions for local residents and 30,000 trees planted around the site in a nature park.

It is fantastic that the Gosport Constituency has this unique opportunity to play its part in helping the UK become more environmentally sustainable and fuelling our green future, aiming to be net-zero by 2050.

In addition, last year renewable energy was our biggest source of electricity for the first time! That's 42% of clean energy from wind, solar, bioenergy and hydropower. A massive leap from 10 years ago when only 7% of our energy came from sustainable sources.

At the end of 2020, the UK secured a trade deal with the EU as the transition period ended and this month I met with Trade Secretary Liz Truss to discuss continuity trade agreements. In under two years, we have agreed trade deals with 63 countries as well as the EU, worth £897 billion in bilateral trade. Now, a year after we left the European Union, we have [formally applied](#) for the £9 trillion Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

In March, whether you're a business who has never exported before or you're a seasoned professional I'm hosting an event that's right for you! With the help of the Department for International Trade, early next month I'm hosting a free event with local and national organisations who can help you learn more about exporting and how it could help your business to be more profitable, productive and resilient! Please email me at caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk to find out more.

Also coming up, from 8th to 14th of February we're celebrating National Apprenticeship Week and I'm again handing over my social media to some fantastic local apprentices and their apprenticeship providers who are going to discuss the challenges and triumphs of the past year.



As ever, if you have any questions or queries please email my team and I at caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk.

***Best Wishes
Caroline x***



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