

CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

NEWSLETTER

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As we plunge into December, with Christmas around the corner, I know a number of constituents are concerned about the new Covid variant and the impact this may have on our celebrations, especially following last year's last minute restrictions which ruined so many plans for family gatherings.

The Government have bought in a [range of new measures](#) in light of the Omicron variant including compulsory face coverings on public transport and in shops. International arrivals must now self-isolate until they receive a negative day 2 PCR test result and all contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of their vaccination status.

The vaccination programme is moving apace with those aged 12-17 now being offered a second vaccine and [boosters expanded](#) to anyone over 18. Vaccines remain our most effective tool against Covid-19. I urge everyone who is eligible to come forward when called. The PM confirmed that everyone over 18 will be offered a booster over the next 8 weeks. Community pharmacy places will be increased and 400 military personnel will assist efforts. I had my booster at Jaffers Pharmacy in Rowner this month. I also spent a morning volunteering alongside the fantastic health professionals at a vaccination clinic at Gosport Medical Centre.

Among local concerns about health provision I met this month with bosses from [South Central Ambulance](#), [Southern Health NHS Trust](#), [Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust](#) and the [Clinical Commissioning Group](#). I was keen to hear about their plans to overcome current challenges and face the winter months ahead. I was pleased to hear that a new 2 storey ward block will be opening at QA Hospital next week with 50 overnight and 30 day-patient beds. This will help ease pressure on our hospital flow and reduce ambulance delays.

We can all do our bit to relieve pressure on our health services. If in doubt visit <http://111.nhs.uk> or call 111. Only use 999 in an emergency.



There is also great work happening in the community to reduce demand in our acute hospitals.

This month I visited the Clarence Unit at Woodcot Lodge, a new short term residential service for people who are medically fit to be discharged from hospital but not ready to return to their own homes or care home.

This kind of 'step-down' care, provided by Hampshire County Council, means that beds in the QA are freed up for those with clinical need, while vulnerable people are properly supported and cared for until they are back on their feet.

Since becoming an MP, an enduring local issue has been [access to dentistry](#). Once again I met with NHS England and spoke with the new Health Minister, Maria Caulfield MP, to push for a long term solution. I am encouraged that a review of services in five areas across the South Coast, including Gosport, is now being carried out - it has been suggested that we may see some progress on this by the end of the year, I'll be watching with interest!

This month I also visited a lovely [Shared Lives](#) home in Bridgemary. Shared Lives is a

programme which support adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems or other needs that make it harder for them to live on their own. The schemes match someone who needs care with an approved carer. The carer shares their home, family and community life, and gives care and support to the person with care needs.



As a former Minister for Care, I am deeply concerned about how we care for the most elderly and vulnerable in our society. I spent 2 years working on solutions to some of these tough issues. In the House of Commons this month, I spoke in the Health and Care Bill debate regarding the [importance of getting adult social care](#) proposals right - and how we better support the Care workforce.

I also asked the Care Minister how the Government will [support unpaid carers](#) in DHSC Questions

In MOD Questions this month, I asked about plans to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. Being the MP for a constituency with such deep rooted military links, Remembrance Sunday is always extremely poignant. I attended the Gosport War Memorial Remembrance Parade and then visited the Memorial Gardens in Lee on the Solent and the War Memorial in Stubbington Village to pay my respects. I was honoured to plant a cross in the Constituency Garden of Remembrance in Parliament earlier in the month.



I also attended the Operation Pitting welcome home parade, to honour our service personnel who assisted in the recent evacuation of 15,000 British nationals and Afghan allies from Afghanistan.

This month, the British Army unveiled '[Future Soldier](#)', its most radical transformation programme in over 20 years, demonstrating how the Army is modernising to address next-generation threats across the globe.



Also this month, the [Heritage At Risk Register](#) was published. It was great to welcome Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of [Historic England](#) to Gosport to see the work being done, with the help of Government funding, to bring some of our glorious local heritage sites back into use. We visited [Haslar Police Barracks](#) at Blockhouse, [Bastion No 1](#) by Holy Trinity and [Powder Monkey Brewery](#) in Priddy's Hard.

I visited [Gosport Cruising Club](#) to hear about the history of the site and their exciting plans for the future. It was

lovely to take in the breathtaking views from the clubhouse on the edge of Forton Lake and meet some of the members. It was also a delight to meet some of my youngest constituents when I officially opened the new YMCA Early Years Nursery building at the St Vincent campus. The pre-school years are so crucial for a child's development and [YMCA Gosport's](#) new purpose-built facilities, will add to the high quality early years provision in our area.



I enjoyed meeting some slighter older children from [Bay House School](#) and [Brune Park](#) who were candidates for [UK Youth Parliament](#) elections. I also took part in a Q&A with the [Stubbington Guides](#) to mark [UK Parliament Week](#). Climate change and the environment are always regular questions from our youngsters, who care so deeply about the future of our country and our planet.



This month saw the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, where world leaders came together to make commitments to address some of the biggest environmental challenges facing our world.

Meanwhile, at the Hampshire COP26 Summit, local residents were able to hear from DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow about Government. I chaired a Transport Panel, hearing from [South Western Railway](#), [Fareham Borough Council](#) and [Wightlink Ferries](#) about progress towards cleaner, healthier & more sustainable transport.

Earlier in November I held a Public Meeting with Southern Water. In light of recent local concerns over the Environment Bill and it's impact on the sewage outflows into our waters, it was a timely opportunity for local residents to hear from Southern Water Chief Executive on plans to improve water quality and have their questions answered. I was delighted that over 100 local people took the chance to join this event.

I also hosted Gosport's second Exporting Event, in conjunction with the [Department for International Trade](#), supporting local businesses who are keen to explore opportunities in overseas markets and grow their businesses.

I joined a meeting between local businesses, the police and residents in Holbrook to put an action plan in place to address a recent rise in incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Back in Westminster, I caught up with Twitter, to hear their plans to improve online safety for users of their platforms. I also met with the [National Lottery Community Fund](#) to talk about their support for local organisations. With a wider range of different funding levels available, and a more streamlined application process, I would encourage local groups to explore the potential of a bid to the fund.

One of the local charities which receives National Lottery support is the [Moving on Project](#) who provide one-to-one counselling for young people aged 11-25 in our area. I had the pleasure to learn more about their work when I visited at the start of the month.

I also joined the wonderful [Alzheimer's Society](#) Hampshire 'Singing for the Brain' group. The last 2 years have been incredibly tough for those living with Dementia & their carers and groups like this offer great support, fun & friendship.



Back in Parliament, this month saw the

[Down Syndrome Bill](#) come forward for debate. The [Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association](#) have been great champions for dedicated legislation to ensure people with Downs Syndrome get the high quality healthcare, education and support they need & deserve and I was proud to give this Bill my backing.



Also in Parliament, I met with the Lord Chancellor, Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, to discuss how the Government might improve the rights for grandchildren to access their grandparents following parental divorce or bereavement. I look forward to working with the Ministry of Justice, Dame Esther Rantzen and Grandparent Support Groups on this deeply important issue.

Other announcements from Parliament this month include:

- Tougher penalties for child cruelty were announced, with the introduction of [Tony's Law](#), named in honour of seven-year-old Tony Hudgell, who had both legs amputated following the most appalling abuse by his birth parents.
- £20million per year for [tidal energy](#), kickstarting a brand-new chapter for the tidal industry and creating jobs across the UK.
- [Harper's Law](#) will be added to the statute book, introducing mandatory life sentences for anyone convicted of killing an emergency worker whilst committing a crime.
- The [Fan Led Review of Football Governance](#) has been published.
- Cultural and heritage organisations across Hampshire are set to receive well over £2 million as part of the next stage of the [Culture Recovery Fund](#)
- A new criminal offence to [crack down on dog theft](#) was set out in the Government's Kept Animals Bill.

SMALL BUSINESS
SATURDAY
4TH DECEMBER

#SmallBusinessBigDifference

**“WE’RE BACKING
SMALL BUSINESSES,
ARE YOU?”**

Coming up, 4th December is [Small Business Saturday](#). It's a great opportunity to do a bit of Christmas shopping at some of the local independent shops which give our high streets their unique identity. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy - last year a record £1.1 billion was spent with them on Small Business Saturday.

Don't forget my Best Independent Shop Competition Shortlist is running until 6pm on Small Business Saturday so please do support our local traders and [vote for your favourite](#) from the Top 10!



As ever, my team and I are here to help so if you have any questions or queries, please do email caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk.

Best wishes
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