

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

March 2022

ISSUE: 129



Well hasn't this month absolutely flown by! With the clocks changing and lighter evenings combined with that tantalising glimpse or warmer weather, it finally feels like Spring is in the air!

This month it has been heart-warming to see the outpouring of support, both in the Gosport constituency and nationwide in response to the Ukraine crisis. Whether that be through people applying to house refugees through the [Homes for Ukraine Scheme](#), donating supplies or funds to assist with humanitarian aid efforts. Local man Volodymyr, who moved to Bridgemarky from Ukraine 18 years ago - has been driving a lorry-full of humanitarian aid to Ukraine every fortnight. I'll shortly be sharing more details of how local people can support his fantastic efforts.

It was a privilege to join my colleagues in signing the Book of Solidarity, showing our unwavering supporting for Ukraine. The signed Book was sent to Ruskin Stefanchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Parliament of Ukraine. Members of Parliament were also very honoured to be addressed by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who spoke so movingly about the horrors that had unfolded across his nation and what more the international community could do to support.

At the start of the month I asked the [Foreign Office](#) for further localised support in Ukraine's neighbouring countries to process refugee's visa applications & bring them swiftly to our shores, and I am pleased that over 20,000 visas have now been granted through the Ukrainian Family Scheme.



On the note of welcoming people to the UK it was also wonderful news that

Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe returned to the UK after six long years. It has been a campaign that I was proud to have supported and I'm so grateful to the Foreign Office and everyone who worked so hard to get her back!

I was pleased this month to use the opportunity of International Women's Day to celebrate some of the fabulous and inspiring women from across Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head. It was lovely to receive all your nominations of mum's, daughter's, friends and colleagues and to hear of all the wonderful ways they have helped and inspired. You can view the nominees and read their stories at [Caroline Dinenage | Facebook](#).



As I'm the wife of a Gurkha I discovered that International Women's Day also coincided with Nepali Army Day - and was excited to be invited to the Nepal Embassy to celebrate with a truly international group of inspiring women!

In what seems like a month of exciting invitations I was also really lucky to represent the Gosport Constituency at St James' Palace for a meeting with HRH The Prince of Wales.



I also spilled the beans this month on Rachel Johnson's Difficult Women podcast at LBC. You can find out whether I am actually a difficult woman (!) and hear me discuss all manner of topics [here](#).

This month has brought further support in response to the rising cost of living through the Chancellor's Spring Budget and I welcome the measures introduced that will support households across the entire country.

My team and I also organised and hosted a local Cost of Living Event this month at Gosport Discovery Centre. Many thanks to British Gas, Citizens Advice Gosport, Connect To Support Hampshire, EDF, HSBC, Gosport Food Partnership, Nationwide Building Society, Portsmouth Water, Smart Energy GB and Southern Water for coming along to offer my constituents useful advice and information. I hope to organise a similar event again in the future.

You can find out more information about help with the cost of living at <https://www.caroline4gosport.co.uk/help-cost-living>.

I also organised and hosted a public meeting with [Southern Water](#) and the [Environment Agency](#) where they discussed the work they are doing to improve our water quality and constituents had the opportunity to ask questions of both organisations.



## Tackling the cost of living



- Fuel duty cut**  
Frozen for 12 years, now cut by 5p
- £330 Tax Cut**  
Earn up to £12,570 and pay no National Insurance or Income Tax
- Cutting Income Tax**  
From 2024, basic rate will be cut from 20% to 19%
- Energy Bills Rebate**  
Giving millions of households a rebate of £350
- National Living Wage increased**  
A boost of over £1,000 a year
- UC taper reduced**  
Extra £1,000 for 2 million families
- Licence fee frozen**  
Frozen at £159, halting a rise to £180
- Doubling the Household Support Fund**  
Helping families in need with £1 billion

I've had a busy month visiting local businesses and organisations and it was a real milestone to have my first full constituency Friday without a single Zoom meeting in two years!

I visited Home By The Sea in Lee on the Solent, which I had been due to officially open in December when Covid struck! It was great to finally meet Leanne & Kim - this little shop is a treasure trove of lovely home furnishings and gorgeous gift ideas.

Still in Lee, at Small Talk Preschool I met a dinosaur and a princess - as well as all the wonderful staff - to discuss early years education in our area and all the support available to help families with the cost.

No constituency Friday is ever complete without a hard hat - I visited Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks electricity distribution centre to hear how they overcome challenges, like last month's storms, to keep our electricity flowing.

I caught up with Business South who are promoting investment opportunities in the Solent region to a National and International audience.

I also faced a grilling from 90 A-Level politics students at Bay House School and it was really good to hear their views!



It was a real delight to present the Gosport Chief Scouts Awards.

I'm very lucky to be a Scouting Ambassador and it was great to meet the Scouts, Cubs and even a Squirrel who've reached these impressive milestones, as well as the fab leaders & family members who support them.



I was also very fortunate to have been invited to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Masons and The News, Portsmouth Community Chest event to present cheques to some fantastic local charities including Gosport MS Society UK, MHA Communities Gosport and Fareham, The Rainbow Centre and Fareham Monday Club.

In other local news, all those years of campaigning & working with partners to secure the funding for a new Gosport access road are finally coming to fruition. The Stubbington Bypass is now in its final construction stages and it was fantastic to join my constituency neighbour, Suella Braverman, to take a drive along it.

Whilst there have been frustrations due to roadworks, this should soon be a distant memory, as the Stubbington Bypass is due to open at the end of May. It is hoped that this 50mph 3.5km road should take at least half of the daily 25,000 vehicles out of Stubbington Village.

There are no silver bullets to reducing journey times and congestion on and off the Gosport peninsula. The £42m Stubbington Bypass is just one part of over £100m invested into improving access to our peninsula and removing barriers to growth and investment.

You can take a virtual journey down the Bypass at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_B-A8ukkILo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B-A8ukkILo)



More good transport news on the transformation of Gosport's waterfront was also announced. With funding from the government's [Brownfield Land Release Fund, including £1.25m for the bus station](#) site as well as £850k for the depot. This will boost the local economy & attract visitors.

Further to this, it is good to see that the brand-new Emergency Department at Queen Alexandra Hospital has received full planning permission by Portsmouth City Council following £58.3m of Government investment which I helped to secure. A new Emergency Department will improve facilities, capacity & overall patient care – significantly helping ambulance waiting times and making a real difference to our region.



In Westminster this month, I have received enough cross-party support from MPs to hold a debate on Childhood Cancer in the House of Commons. This has not been debated in the Chamber of the House of Commons in recent years - despite being such an important issue.

Many readers will be familiar with the story of Sophie Fairall - who heartbreakingly lost her life to cancer in September aged just 10. I have been working with Charlotte Fairall, Sophie's mum to increase awareness and drive improvements in the way we detect, treat and care for children with Cancer. This is the latest move in our attempt to raise awareness.

As a previous Minister of State at the Department of Health and Social Care and now the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Carers, I am passionate about representing the rights of my constituents relating to health and social care.

That is why in the debate on the Health and Social Care Bill I [welcomed the finalisation of legislation](#) to deliver mandatory learning disability and autism training for all health and care staff, which I started as Care Minister.

I also [spoke in favour of the Government's amendment](#) that ensures unpaid

carers will be contacted when a patient they care for is discharged from hospital. This will mean that patients can receive the best possible care and unpaid carers better support. You can watch my speech here.

Also in the chamber, during the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Oral Parliamentary Questions (OPQs), I [asked the Minister for an update](#) on when employment leave for unpaid carers is likely to be delivered. It was good to hear the Minister's assurances on this and I look forward to more news soon.

I also asked a number of other OPQs including:

- Ministry of Justice OPQs - I [asked the Minister Tom Pursglove MP](#) to improve grandchildren's access to their grandparents following a divorce or bereavement. I met with Dominic Raab to discuss this last year, really pleased to hear work is now underway!
- Ministry of Defence OPQs - I [asked the Minister Lee Docherty](#) for the Veterans Strategy Action Plan to promote a more positive image of our veterans and the skills they bring to the civvy workforce. As just under 10% of Gosport's working population are veterans it's a really important issue for local people.

This month was also English Tourism Week and I celebrated the remarkable heritage and beautiful coast which make Gosport area a fab tourist destination including the Royal Submarine Museum, The Explosion Museum, Little Woodham 17th Century Village, the Diving Museum, and the Hovercraft Museum.



Our current legislation on imports of hunting trophies is one of the toughest in the world, protecting nearly 7k species but there's more to do & 9/10 people support. I met Peter Egan with my pal Tracey Crouch to discuss extending the ban.



Great to meet Age UK in Parliament to talk about the services & advice they provide for older people & their families in Gosport, Lee on the Solent, Stubbington & Hill Head. Their free advice line runs 365 days a year 0800 169 65 65.

I was pleased to welcome the Government's announcement that Gosport Borough Council will receive [£80,000 in funding](#) as part of the Changing Places Fund - an issue that I worked hard on when I was Care Minister back in 2018.

Over 250,000 severely disabled people do not have access to public toilet facilities that meet their needs. Changing Places Toilets (CPTs), unlike standard accessible toilets, have an adult changing bench and hoist facilities as well as extra space for carers. There are around 1,300 registered CPTs in England but demand for provision is outstripping supply and the number of CPTs needs to increase to improve access for severely disabled people and their carers.

#### Other Westminster news:

- [The Online Safety Bill has been published](#). This world-leading, game-changing giant piece of legislation will: tackle criminal activity; protect children; address harmful content; and protect freedom of speech.
- The UK Government is [increasing the UK's nuclear energy production](#) capacity - improving our energy security, creating more jobs and furthering our commitment to Net Zero.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has [announced new world-leading legally binding environment targets](#) including: Improving biodiversity; cleaning our air; halting the decline of wildlife populations & ultimately protecting & restoring our natural world. You can have your say here.
- Spring Budget [Cost of Living Support](#):
  - Fuel Duty cut by 5% - this is the biggest cut to fuel duty rates ever and worth over £5 billion. This will take effect from 6pm on the 23rd March 2022 and will be in place until March 2023.
  - VAT Relief - homeowners having materials like heat pumps, solar panels or insulation installed will pay 0% VAT as opposed to the standard 5%, this will save families up to £8,000 on installation and up to £300 per year on their energy bills. Wind and Water

- turbines will also be zero rated - reversing the EU's decision.
- Doubling the Household Support Fund to £1bn, distributed via Local Authorities, supporting the country's most vulnerable households.
- £330 tax cut - from July people will be able to earn £12,570 a year without paying any Income Tax or National Insurance. This National Insurance reduction will more than cover the NI Levy for the 70% least well-off.
- Employment Allowance will increase to £5,000, a tax cut worth up to £1,000 for half a million small businesses.

As always, if you need any assistance or have any thoughts on how we could improve our service, please contact my team and I at [caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk).



Best wishes  
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