

# CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

## NEWSLETTER

November 2022

ISSUE: 136



November has absolutely flown by and as we head towards Christmas, it doesn't feel like the pace will be slowing any time soon!

Parliament has been in full swing with lots of debates and legislation to keep me busy. Meanwhile, back in the constituency, there have been plenty of great visits and interesting meetings.



At the start of the month, we were blessed to have The Princess Royal in the constituency to open the [Gosport Community Hub](#). The Hub, based in Brune Park, has been supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and GFMAT (The Education Trust led by Bay House and Brune Park). It is a vital support network for local services families, providing a place to meet and find support. Less than a month before, HRH had given me my Damehood and said how much she enjoys visiting Gosport. It was great that she was able to make it back so soon!

There was also good news for Gosport's cultural scene this month too. Arts Council England announced that [Hampshire Cultural Trust is to receive £500,000](#) of funding as one of their National Portfolio Organisations, some of which will go towards Gosport Museum and Art Gallery. This month the newly renovated building was officially reopened to the public, with a stylish new cafe, exhibitions and displays. It's definitely worth checking it out - you won't be disappointed!



Naturally, the armed forces is incredibly important to the fabric of Gosport. There are often reminders of this as we look over the Solent to see naval ships moving in and out of Portsmouth Harbour. This month there was an even bigger selection of international warships both in the Harbour and anchored offshore. This included the USS Hudner, USS Gerald R Ford and the SPS Álvaro de Bazán. Physical evidence of the success of the NATO alliance.

Our nation's defences of course rely so much on the Royal Navy and the work taking place on both sides of Portsmouth Harbour. This month I paid a visit to Commodore John Voyce, formerly Head of HMS Sultan, now



November, of course, marks the solemn occasion of Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. I placed a cross in Parliament's Garden of Remembrance on behalf of my Gosport constituency. It was also heart-warming to see such a large turnout for the Remembrance service at Gosport War Memorial. A reminder of both the sacrifices made to secure our freedom and the ongoing struggles in other parts of the world to preserve those freedoms, especially in Ukraine.

Portsmouth Naval Base Commander. It's not every day you get to commute to work by jetting across the harbour in a naval boat!

It was a great pleasure to [welcome the Secretary of State for Defence](#), Ben Wallace, to the constituency. In this month of Remembrance, I took him to meet World War 2 veteran Geoff Rushton. Geoff served as a Flight Lieutenant on Lancaster Bombers. With so few of this great generation left to share their stories, I know that the Minister greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet Geoff.

I also took the Secretary of State to visit local defence company, StandardAero at Fleetlands, one of the key maintenance, repair and overhaul providers of military and commercial aircraft - including Chinook and Gazelle AH Mk1 helicopters. I thoroughly enjoyed hosting the Defence Secretary in Gosport and took the opportunity to remind him of the importance that our peninsula plays in the defence of our nation.



In other defence related news, I was pleased to see that the Office for Veterans Affairs and the Office for National Statistics are running a [survey](#) of veterans to discover how support networks are utilised, and how they can be improved. Gosport has the highest proportion of veterans of any Parliamentary constituency, so this information will be invaluable to fulfilling the government's objective of making the UK the best place to be a veteran by 2028. I would encourage veterans and their dependents to take part in this critical survey.



This month, I was lucky to be invited to sail across the Solent with Sea Cadets from all over the country. Our vessel? TS Royalist, an impressive, square-rigged brig which is based in Fort Blockhouse. The Sea Cadets are a brilliant youth programme, offering ages 12-18 the opportunity to develop sea-faring skills, boost confidence and to get on the water. Thank you to the fantastic team of staff and volunteers for inviting me along!

I also met this month with the new CEO of Southern Water, Lawrence Gosden, to discuss local residents concerns with sewage. It was interesting to find out that 30 years ago 70% of untreated sewage was released into our seas and waterways. That figure is now less than 5% but lots of work is underway to bring it to zero. Southern Water are carrying out several pilots which look promising, more details soon.



I caught up with Oarsome Chance, who work with young people struggling in the mainstream school system. They offer support, teach brilliant skills & turn lives around. Among their projects, they make a range of [gorgeous bags](#) up-cycled from used sails, a perfect Christmas present for the keen sea-goer or a stylish coast dweller in your life!

Popping across the Harbour, I was invited to be a subject in local artist Pete Codling's epic [art project 'Crowd'](#). This is a vast tapestry depicting the history of Portsmouth and surrounding areas through charcoal portraits on a scale replica of HMS Victory's Spritsail. It's definitely worth popping over to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Storehouse 9 to check it out.





I always enjoy visiting local business and this month saw me visit Norjon Engineers. 10 years ago, I opened their new factory in Elson, now they employ 40 people, making hi-tech components. It was good to catch up with them and see the success of their business.



I was very pleased to attend the opening of an outdoor library space for students of Holbrook primary school. This gives children a quiet space to read during breaks. Thank you to the year 5 & 6 reading ambassadors for showing me around.

This year, I am once again running my Best Independent Shop Competition to support Small Business Saturday. After a round of voting, we have a shortlist of 10 local small businesses. You can vote for your favourite [here](#).

Plans to revamp the waterfront section of the Daedalus Site, including businesses, community facilities and homes are afoot and I caught up with the team before their consultation this month. You can find out more about their plans [here](#). I also caught up with Homes England to discuss their part of the Daedalus site, works for Phase 2b should be underway shortly.



Readers of last month's newsletter will know that I have been working to avoid the closure of Titchfield Haven Visitors Centre and Haven Cottage.

To that end, I visited Titchfield Haven to meet the dedicated volunteers and regular visitors. Over a delicious coffee in the packed cafe they told me what the Haven means to them.

I also made a deputation at a special meeting of Fareham Borough Council and was encouraged by their decision to make this a Community Asset, which will offer extra protections for the site. A decision on the future of these buildings will be made by Hampshire County Council on December 8.

Stubbington residents will be well aware of the cramped facilities at Stubbington Medical Practice and I met up with the partners of the Surgery this month to reinvigorate plans to find a solution to this.

Back in Parliament, the Order Paper has been stacked with business. This month saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer give the much anticipated [Autumn Statement](#). Key commitments included: protection of the triple lock on state pensions and uprating benefits in line with inflation, increases to the Minimum Wage, a boost of £6.6 billion in funding for the NHS & Social Care, and £4.4 billion of funding for school budgets.



At the start of November, it was Parliament Week. This is an annual event that aims to promote citizenship education to children, through learning about the role of Parliament, MPs and our constitutional development.

I circulated resources to local schools, as well as visiting Year 5's in Bedenham Primary School to talk about how Parliament works.

Parliament was looking appropriately decorative for the occasion- check out this LEGO suffragette celebrating votes for women!

Earlier this month, you may have seen me on your telly, talking to Peter Henley on [BBC Politics South](#). We discussed the Haslar Immigration Removal Centre and the immigration system more widely, provision on childcare, and warm hubs in the constituency, including our fantastic Lee Hub.

I participated in several Westminster Hall debates in November too. For those of you unfamiliar with Parliamentary lingo, a Westminster Hall debate is a motion about a general topic. At the start of November, I contributed to a [debate on Online Harms](#). Having previously been the Minister with purview over the Online Safety Bill, it is vital that we see this, long overdue, piece of legislation conclude its passage through Parliament as soon as possible. I was pleased to hear this week that it will be returning to Parliament at the start of December, albeit with some amendments. I [spoke to the BBC](#) about this.

I also [held a debate on support for Art and Culture](#). I talked about the incredible value that the Creative and Cultural sector provide to our wellbeing and our economy, making up 12% of our service exports, with the potential to rejuvenate communities and promote our country internationally. Looking at success stories like South Korea, it is clear that the government can be doing more to support this vital industry. I spoke about this on Radio 4 in [The Week in Westminster](#).

I'm delighted to have served on the [Carers Leave Bill committee](#). The Bill has now passed this stage of the legislative process, meaning it is one step closer to providing unpaid carers with one weeks leave to balance caring responsibilities with working. This will benefit both employers and employees, improving staff retention and giving unpaid carers the flexibility to help juggle their care commitments.

I also tabled an amendment, New Clause 7, to the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill. My amendment aimed to prevent the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) from reclassifying bedrooms in Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) as separate dwellings, thus landing tenants with disproportionately large and unexpected council tax bills. It's become an issue on Gosport High Street. I secured a commitment from the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, for an accelerated consultation on how the VOA apply council tax to HMOs with regulations to prevent the reclassification if necessary. You can see my speech on this [here](#).



As part of my role on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I attended the plenary session in Madrid over a busy weekend. I worked alongside fellow members from across the NATO alliance to produce the papers and recommendations which will be submitted to world leaders on issues impacting global security, from cyber threats to sexual violence as a weapon of war. We were also very fortunate to be invited for a reception at the Royal Palace with King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia.

This month I also concluded my Community Pub Hero competition. Congratulations to the Carisbrooke Arms who won with 320 votes. I have nominated them on behalf of the Gosport constituency for the national round which is run by PubAid and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Beer. I am sure you will join me in wishing them the best of luck!

Don't forget to shop small this Saturday and vote for your favourite Best Independent Shop [here](#) before 2 December.

As ever, please do get in touch if you have any concerns that my office and I can assist with.

Best wishes  
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