

CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

NEWSLETTER

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April draws to a close and with it the Bank Holiday and memories of Easter weekend, when I hope you all managed to enjoy an appropriate amount of chocolate!



I started the month off with a visit to [Partnering Health Limited](#). They support NHS 111 calls with Out of Hours calls and specialist call-backs. Serving over 1.7 million people in Hampshire, including Gosport. It was great to watch their health professionals in action and hear about their latest innovative work, including the development of virtual wards to help care for vulnerable people in the comfort and familiarity of their own homes.

I spent a morning with Hampshire Councillor, Lesley Meenaghan, and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Donna Jones, with a drop in surgery for constituents to ask questions about local policing. We covered a range of issues, from the re-opening of Gosport Police Station to the removal of the requirement for all Police to study for a degree, which has been a disincentive for some potential recruits, particularly those who have already served in our armed forces and bring a wealth of relevant expertise.



Donna has been doing a fantastic job as our Police and Crime Commissioner, as the recent police numbers testify. There are 582 new police officers on Hampshire's streets since 2019, as part of the government's manifesto pledge to deliver 20,000 new police. I am pleased to say that the government has not only achieved this target, but exceeded it, with nearly 21,000 new police officers.

Progress is being made on my ongoing campaign for improved childhood cancer services. I [met with Education Minister Claire Coutinho](#) to discuss how schools and local authorities can better support children undergoing, or in recovery from, cancer to maintain their education and not be disadvantaged by their circumstances. I have asked for Local Authority Guidance to be updated, and for the Department of Education to produce a report on the long-term impact of a cancer diagnosis. This is part of my campaign with Sophie Fairall's mum, Charlotte. Regular readers will know of Sophie's story. Sophie, from Stubbington, died from Rhabdomyosarcoma at the age of just 10. Charlotte and I are campaigning for a Childhood Cancer Mission, to improve the detection, treatment and care for children diagnosed with cancer.

Charlotte and I also met with the Director of Cancer Services at the Department of Health & Social Care this month to discuss our Mission. We were very pleased at their positive response to our proposals, there are some exciting developments underway, watch this space!

April also marked Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month. I [met with Sarcoma UK](#) to discuss their work supporting children and teenagers diagnosed with Sarcoma- the third most common form of cancer in young people.



I placed a charity bet for the [Grand National](#) in support of Sophie's Legacy courtesy of the Betting & Gaming Council & Ladbrokes. I'm pleased to say that my chosen horse, Mister Coffey, raised £500, which will be going straight to Sophie's Legacy to support their important work.

Also this month we marked St. George's Day. Although Saint George wasn't a knight, never visited England, and probably never fought a dragon, his tales of courage and humanity have inspired English people since medieval times. I joined Gosport District Scouts and the Mayor at the Millennium Sundial for the annual St George's Day parade. As a Scouting Ambassador, it's always a pleasure to join them for events like this and great to hear that Scouting membership has grown 30% in the district this year!



In other news, [the merger between the Willow Group and Gosport Medical Centre](#) has now gone ahead. Patients impacted by the change should have been contacted by the practice, there will be a series of in-person events in the weeks ahead for patients to meet with the practice and find out more information.

Following the resignation of the BBC Chairman, Richard Sharp, I spoke to Esther and Philip on GB News about the future of the BBC. You can watch my interview [here](#).



I had the pleasure of joining the Gosport Older Person's Forum for their open meeting in Stoke Road where we discussed everything from better Parliamentary representation for seniors, to concerns about online fraud. There was support from the Willow Group with using the NHS App and digital technology to help make healthcare more accessible.

There are no local elections in Gosport this year, but myself and the team of local Conservative Councillors have been out and about on the doorsteps throughout the month with my 'Caroline Consults' survey on local health & care provision. The results of the survey will help me to identify the priorities and biggest issues when it comes to accessing health services. It will be

extremely useful to know my constituents concerns, you can complete the survey online [here](#).



I was honoured to be asked to participate in the [Hampshire Care Association](#) Spring Seminar to give my thoughts on the priorities for adult social care as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by the sector. It was very useful to hear speakers from Hampshire County Council and the Care Quality Commission.

Towards the end of the month, I [challenged Department of Health & Social Care](#) ministers to better ensure that people with learning disabilities and autistic people are not being unnecessarily kept as in-patients in mental health hospitals, instead of discharged into the community and supported to live fulfilling and rewarding lives.

On a similar theme, the Women and Equalities Select Committee, of which I am a member, held a [session on support for people with learning disabilities and autistic people](#). It's important that health care professionals are given the right training to communicate with their patients and know the reasonable adjustments to care provision which make all the difference. As a former health minister I helped introduce [Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training](#) to ensure that patients with learning disabilities and autism are understood, and preventable deaths are avoided.

The committee is also conducting an enquiry into misogyny in music. I have been shocked to hear some of the experiences women in all sections of the music industry, from classical to pop, have faced.



[Level Up Gosport](#) held a certificate presentation for their Youth Ambassadors, who do such great work volunteering in our community and have recently been raising awareness of cancer in young people. It was lovely to have the opportunity to thank them for all their efforts.

Readers of last month's newsletter will know of my recent trip to Sierra Leone with the International Rescue Committee and the Coalition for Global Prosperity. It was good to meet up with them in Parliament this month to reminisce and reflect on the impact of UK aid to my colleagues. I wrote an article upon my return from the trip. You can read about it [here](#).

I Chaired a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Central South. In partnership with [Business South](#), the APPG helps to bring businesses from the Central South Region together with MPs to ensure the interests of local business are being properly represented. Very pleased to have the opportunity to be a founder and Chair of this APPG.

I joined the Gosport War Memorial centenary celebration event. The hospital was opened 100 years ago after local people raised the funds to build it. The

centenary was marked with a military salute, pointing to the close connection between the hospital and the Armed Forces, in particular the Royal Marines.



We've had some good news this month for the local economy! [Qinetiq has been awarded a 10 year contract](#) from the Ministry of Defence worth £259 million. This will support 260 local jobs and apprenticeships delivering critical support to the Royal Navy's fleet.

Historic England have done a good job in Gosport rejuvenating some of the historic buildings in Stoke Road and the High Street, of which Gosport has so many. I joined them this month for a walk about to see their progress on sites like the Royal Arms canopy and hear how they are hoping to help breathe new life into our High Street with their [Heritage Action Zones](#). Gosport is lucky to have two HAZ's, on the High Street and historical sites in the wider constituency, bringing investment and regeneration.



I joined Stubbington group 'Poetry in Motion' for a reading of their first collected anthology, published to mark and celebrate the upcoming Coronation. You can get your hands on your own copy at Stubbington Library.

Not long to go until the Coronation, and you may be thinking of ways to spend the bank holiday weekend. There is a handy events map to help, which can be accessed [here](#). In Lee-on-the-Solent, there will be a street party on May 7, with food venders, entertainment and a market running from noon. On Gosport High Street, a street party is being held from 10am-4:30pm on May 6. This will have entertainment, food venders and craft stalls. Fun for all the family!

[Submariner's Stories](#) is a local project, launched to tell the tales of servicemen and women who have served in the Royal Navy submarine service. The interviews are all available online and well worth reading or listening to, full of tales of Gosport's famous Submarine Escape Training Tower (SETT), and life as a submariner.

I had one of my regular meetings with Hampshire County Council to keep up to date with their work in our area. On this occasion, I met with the Children's Services, Education and Transport leads to talk everything from pot holes to teacher's strikes.

I also visited Gomer Infant School to attend their '[Clever Never Goes](#)' session. These give children the know-how to keep safe from abductions. Most of which are committed by people known to the victim, not a



stranger. Over 2,000 schools, scouting groups and police authorities now deliver 'Clever Never Goes' lessons, which was created by an head-teacher from Stubbington. It was great to see the impact on youngsters at Gomer.

The 21,315 pensioners living in Gosport will have benefitted from a 10.1% uplift in their state pension this month. This is good news to help with the cost of living. A further £300 pensioner cost of living payment will also be paid in the coming months.

To help vulnerable people, the government has also started paying the next batch of Cost of Living payments. The first of three payments will be £301, and paid to those on means tested benefits. All three payments throughout 2023 will total £900. Those with disabilities will also receive an additional £150. If eligible, you will receive the payments automatically, so please be vigilant for scams! Find out more about eligibility [here](#).

Back in Parliament I attended the one-year anniversary reception of the Menopause Mandate. An organisation who have come together to work for improved menopause support. I caught up with Penny Lancaster, who has been a key part of the campaign. Also this month, Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) Pre-Payment Certificates became available from April 1. This will reduce the cost of HRT to £19.30 for 12 months- a significant saving for many. You can apply for the HRT Pre-Payment Certificate [here](#).



Towards the end of the month, the Illegal Migration Bill passed through its remaining Commons stages, and heads to the Lords. One step closer to stopping the people traffickers who profit from dangerous small boats journeys across the Channel.

There was also another debate on [sewage outflows](#) into rivers and coastal waters. The Conservative Party voted for this motion which commits to cleaning up our waters. You can read more about the government's 'Plan for Water' [here](#), which includes more investment in fixing overflows, setting up a water restoration fund (paid for by fining polluting water companies) to clean up illegal discharges, and introducing unlimited fines on polluting companies.

May promises to be an incredibly eventful month, I am sure that, like me, some of you will be looking forward to watching the Eurovision finals, held in Liverpool on behalf of our friends in Ukraine. Glitter boots and tambourines at the ready! And of course the Coronation of King Charles III, which promises to be an event the nation can all be proud of.

However you are celebrating next month, I hope you have lots of fun!

In the meantime, as ever, my team and I are on standby for any concerns or problems you may have. Please do get in touch via caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk.

Best wishes
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