

CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

NEWSLETTER

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June has flown past, and those warm summer days finally arrived at long last!

This month we welcomed some good news for our area. In health care provision, Bury Road Surgery is to remain open. I have worked hard to prevent the closure of the surgery, raising it in the House of Commons and in frequent meetings with the Integrated Care Board. It is a huge relief that a way forward has been found that keeps the surgery operational.

Good news also for the new Gosport Interchange, with construction on the new bus station commencing this month. I gave my thoughts on the project in an [interview with BBC Radio Solent](#).

And for the hat trick, I am delighted to tell you that The Titchfield Haven Community Hub will be granted £185,977 from the Government's Community Ownership Fund to buy the asset and re-open it. A [Business Plan](#) for the community hub, cafe and holiday flats has been submitted to Hampshire County Council alongside a proposal for [management of the nature reserve](#). So many of us fought hard against the Council's frustrating decision to sell off the site at the end of last year - it's so exciting to think it will be saved.



At the start of June we marked Carers Week and I was delighted to be named as a Parliamentary Champion for Carers. I led a debate in the House of Commons, giving an opportunity to highlight the stories of unpaid carers across the country, and pay tribute to the 7,000+ unpaid carers in the Gosport constituency. You can watch a part of my speech [here](#).

I also held a drop-in session, bringing unpaid carers & support charities to Parliament to meet MPs and explain the vital role they play in supporting loved ones and the help and assistance they need.

I [signed a letter](#) to the Prime Minister urging him to support Carers Week, and set up a cross-Departmental Ministerial Group to focus on supporting unpaid carers. I am delighted that this suggestion was adopted by government.

I also used my own social media to shine a spotlight on some of our very own carers here in Gosport. Congratulations to Alex and Beth who were both nominated.

For many years I've worked with the incredible Paula McGowan to see the introduction of mandatory training on Learning Disability and Autism for all Health and Care staff. The training is in the name of Paula's son Oliver, who died in the most tragic of circumstances, aged just 17. Having successfully piloted the training, I am thrilled the Government has now launched the [consultation on Code of Practice](#) for rolling it out. This will help establish how health and care providers can best ensure their staff will receive the appropriate training on supporting autistic patients or those with a learning disability. I have no doubt that this training will save lives and send heartfelt gratitude to Paula and Tom McGowan for their tireless work.

As you may know, I love catching up with constituents who are visiting Parliament- this month I met up with the Veterans Buns & Banter group who are a part of the Lee Community Hub.



I also caught up with Gosport's Reverend Samantha Martell at the annual Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast.



Some of you may also remember that I ran a competition to recognise a local taxi driver who goes 'the extra mile' for their customers. Andy Orr of Taxi Lee on the Solent was nominated as our champion, and it was a pleasure to welcome him and his family to a reception in Parliament. His nominators commented on his fantastic customer service, flexibility, and value for money.

I met with Allwyn, who are taking over from Camelot as operator for the National Lottery from next year. I heard about their plans to make the Lottery bigger, better and safer- expanding on the nearly £2 million that Gosport has received over 64 projects so far.



I am holding a National Lottery Funding event in the constituency on July 21 to enable more local organisations to attract the money that they need. More details on this soon- keep an eye out on my social media platforms in the coming weeks!

I gave a keynote address at the Annual Advancing Women in the Workplace conference with my thoughts on promoting equality and inclusion in the workforce.



I also attended an event in Parliament to highlight the value of apprenticeships.

It was great to meet Neve who is an apprentice at QinetiQ in Gosport, to hear about her experiences.

In the Women & Equalities Committee, we took evidence on the Menopause and the workplace, hearing from the Health Minister, Maria Caulfield, and Work & Pensions Minister, Mims Davies. It's important that government and employers provide a good framework of support in the workplace for women going through the menopause to stop them leaving the workforce.

I also met with Bloody Good Period to hear about their ambitions to increase the provision of free period products to those who need them.

This month marked Armed Forces Day - a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our Armed Forces community here in the Gosport constituency. We are not only home to a significant population of

servicing members and their families, 12.5% of our residents are classed as veterans (the highest proportion of any constituency in England or Wales).



It was also Reserve's Day. Reservists make up roughly a sixth of our Armed Forces and provide fantastic capability, particularly in specialist areas such as medical and cyber. I met with some Reservists in Parliament to discuss their role, including one I'm particularly fond of, my husband, Mark, who has served in the Army Reserves for over 30 years.

I also attended an event at the Royal College of Defence Studies where I caught up with the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Patrick Sanders and the First Sea Lord, Sir Ben Key.



I popped over to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard where the National Museum of the Royal Navy have launched a new exhibition called 'Armada Maps - National Treasures'. This is a display of 10 incredible maps which chart the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada.

I was lucky to speak at the preview, which is well worth a visit soon, since the maps are only on display for 45 days!

This month marked the 75th anniversary since HMT Empire Windrush landed in the United Kingdom, with citizens of the empire who emigrated to the UK to help rebuild after the War. This important milestone gave us an opportunity to celebrate the cultural and economic contributions that came along with them. Members of the Windrush generation may be eligible for compensation, with more info on the government [website](#).



I signed a letter to the President of FIFA, with colleagues from the UK parliament and others worldwide, alongside human rights activist Malala Yousafzai and footballer Khalida Popal, urging the organisation to uphold its commitment to human rights. Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, women have been banned from playing the sport. It was a honour to meet with members of the Afghan Women's Development Squad, who came to Parliament.

Back in the constituency, I visited St John's Primary School to join Year 6s for a democracy lesson. It is good for our young people to understand how Parliament works and their role in our democratic system. I also spoke at an assembly at Meoncross School in Stubbington.

Of course, education is a key priority for me in Gosport with all of our secondary schools being ranked as 'requires improvement' by OFSTED. Rest assured, I am doing my bit to help deliver swift improvements. Last month's readers will know I met with Schools Minister Nick Gibb, and this month I met with the Regional DfE

Director to help ensure our local schools are being appropriately supported.

In other education-related news, building on the childcare reforms outlined at the Spring Statement, the Government this month announced that, from September 2024, wraparound childcare will be available for families from 8am to 6pm.

The Department for Work and Pensions has also raised the amount working parents on Universal Credit can claim for their childcare – up to £951 a month for one child, and £1,630 for two or more children. An increase of 47% from the previous limits.

The Government is also providing £204 million of extra funding for local authorities to increase the hourly rates they pay providers.

From this month, new police recruits in Hampshire Constabulary will no longer need university degrees. This sensible change will help make policing as a career more accessible, and increase the number of recruits, particularly among those leaving our armed forces. Find out more [here](#) about applying.

Keeping with the justice theme, I was delighted to visit Hope Street in Southampton. This is a new project by One Small Thing, piloting a healing, trauma-informed approach to women involved in the justice system. I have been a great fan of their work for many years and spoken about it in Parliament. Find out more [here](#).



Did you know that more people have scaled Mount Everest than sailed solo, non stop around the world? In Haslar Marina, I caught up with [Gentoo Racing](#), who are intending to do just that, when skipper, James Harayda, competes in the Vendee Globe Race in 2025.

Following in the footsteps of other local sailing heroes, like Alex Thomson who have previously taken part, James is hoping to become the first British sailor to win this prestigious, and notoriously tough race. Aged just 25 he would be the youngest competitor too!

I also met up with local councillors on Lee-on-the-Solent High Street where we have such a great mix of independent shops, from the attractive gifts and furnishings at Home by the Sea to the many legged creatures at Ridgeway Exotics!



On the theme of local shops, I know that energy prices remain a significant challenge for many small businesses. That's why I am running a survey to better understand the energy usage landscape in the constituency so I can push for the most effective support. If you are a small business owner, you can complete the survey on my [website](#).

I've been kept on my toes this month in my new role as Chair of the Culture, Media & Sport Committee. With the recent high profile concerns around workplace culture at ITV's This Morning, my Committee was



keen to know that public service broadcasters have the right safeguarding policies in place to protect junior staff. You can watch a clip of the inquiry's proceedings [here](#).

I outlined my motivations for holding this inquiry in an [interview on TalkTV](#). Of course, this went alongside the usual committee work, which this month included scrutiny of the draft Media Bill, hearing from the Director General of the BBC and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

I also joined the British Film Institute to welcome new funding that Amazon is creating 350 new apprenticeships in the UK creative industries, building on the £4bn already invested in the sector.

Given Gosport's position as a heritage hot spot, I am keen to use my position as Chair of the Committee to highlight the economic value of culture, heritage and tourism across the UK.

A final reminder that next month, I will be hosting a funding event for local community organisations and charities alongside the National Lottery Community Fund and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Fund. Keep your eyes peeled for more details shortly!

As ever, my team and I are here for any problems, questions or concerns you may have.

Best wishes
Caroline Dinenage

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