

CAROLINE DINENAGE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to my October newsletter. The month, of course, has been overshadowed by the horrific events we have seen unfolding in Israel and Gaza, since the unimaginable terrorist attack on the state of Israel on October 7th.

I have been deeply disturbed by the number of deaths of innocent men, women and children. The humanitarian crisis that has subsequently unfolded in Gaza has also been horrific. Much like Ukraine, Israel has a right to self-defence, but it is also vital that international law is upheld in all actions.

In a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, I was glad to hear of the government's commitment to these principles, as well as to easing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza through successful negotiations with Egypt to open the Rafah crossing, and with an [additional £30m of aid](#) to help civilians caught up in the conflict. The Foreign Secretary is also working with partners in the region to call for a humanitarian pause to the fighting.

The start of October was conference season - a chance for political parties to lay out their agenda and visions for the country.

There were policy announcements of a redirection of [£36 billion to improve transport infrastructure](#), delivery of a world class education system through a new [Advanced British Standard](#) qualification, improving public health by [incrementally raising the legal age of smoking](#), and much more besides.

The Chancellor also announced a [raise to the living wage](#), meaning a pay rise for over 2 million people on the National Living Wage, to at least £11 an hour from next April.



In the constituency this month I met with Headteacher of Bay House, Mr Willis, to discuss his plans to ensure students are safe, happy and achieving their potential in light of last year's disappointing Ofsted report. I also attended a 'Hot Chocolate Friday' session which rewards students who have achieved something remarkable during the week.

I met with the Principle and CEO of Fareham College, Andrew Kaye at their CEMAST and CETC campuses on Daedalus to see their new extension and meet the students from local schools who were taking part in the iConstruct Sessions - to show them the exciting potential of careers in engineering and construction.

I also caught up with the leadership team at Crofton School in Stubbington, following them joining the [HISP Academy](#) group earlier this year, to find out what this will mean for students and staff at the school.

Improving our schools is an absolute priority for me, as it is the key to unlocking the potential of our brilliant young people. To this end, the Schools Regional Director at the Department of Education, Dame Kate Dethridge, and I now meet termly to track local educational standards and ensure our local schools are getting all the support they need.

I hosted a roundtable with the Chamber of Commerce at Fareham Innovation Centre - a really valuable opportunity for me to hear from a local businesses and other stakeholders on what's needed to unlock Gosport's potential. You can find out about their events and seminars [here](#).



I visited Solent World Travel on Lee on the Solent High Street, who made me nostalgic for the holidays! More people are now giving up online providers and using good old local independent travel agents again, and it was great to hear how they take the stress and risk out of holiday planning – do pop in and see them for your next trip!

I caught up with Ben at Victoria Quay to hear about progress at the UK Docks site - £4m investment, 61 jobs and 11 businesses at the former MoD site. The latest is T by the Sea, a new café run by Lorraine, that serves the most delicious cakes.



In Lee-on-the-Solent, I caught up with Alfie and Nikki at Olympia Amusement Arcades alongside [BACTA](#) to hear about the upcoming changes to legislation that affects the arcade industry.

Regular readers will know of the [Imagination Refinery](#)- a project in Gosport High Street that offers facilities, training and a community for creators and designers.

The Gosport Ambassadors meeting took place at the Refinery this month - you can find out more about this scheme [here](#).

The [Football Foundation](#) has provided Gosport with 74 grants, worth nearly £1m in Gosport, including 4 grass pitches and a 3G pitch. I met with them to discuss their continued work in our area.

Chief Inspector Spellerberg and I had one of our regular catch ups on the challenges and successes in fighting crime and cutting anti-social behaviour across Gosport and Fareham.

I've also been out on the doorsteps locally with my team asking constituents for their views on Policing and Crime – tell me yours [here](#).



Local MPs received a briefing from the Integrated Care Board, which oversees health and care across our region. The top lines are:
- 16 % more GP appointments are being offered compared to 2019, 60% of which are face to face.

-20% increase in emergency department attendance. Ambulance waits have been a particular challenge and continue to be a priority focus.

-189,563 people are on waiting lists for routine elective treatment. 57% of these should be treated within 18 weeks. The current median wait is 15 weeks.

-They are looking at getting 'dental buses' to allow mobile dental care.

I met with residents and the management company McCarthy & Stone at the retirement living property, Viewpoint, to discuss the re-cladding of development and ensure that those who live there are being properly supported.

Good news this month too for the future of the Daedalus site. Gosport Borough Council has unanimously approved planning for 346 homes, commercial space, a museum and retirement homes on the waterfront area in Lee on the Solent. Since Daedalus closed in 1996, thousands of jobs and skills training places have been created on Daedalus, this is the next stage towards reimagining the historic site in a way that drives prosperity and boosts the community.



I met with [Secretary of State at the Department of Health & Social Care](#), Steve Barclay, to discuss the Childhood Cancer Mission that myself and Stubbington resident, Charlotte Fairall, have been campaigning for. The Secretary of State updated us on progress made by the department, and it gave us the opportunity to continue pushing the urgency of the cause.

I hosted an event in Parliament to [call on the government to scrap VAT on defibrillators](#), with the aim of making them more accessible to smaller organisations like local businesses and sports clubs. We know that access to defibrillators raises the chances of survival of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest from 8% to 70%. It was a pleasure to meet 19 year-old Jack, whose life was saved thanks to quick access to a defibrillator when playing football.



I met with Breast Cancer Now for Wear It Pink day to highlight the need for breast cancer research funding. Find out more [here](#).

In the Culture, Media & Sport Committee, we held an evidence session with Chair of Trustees of the British Museum, George Osborne, on lessons learned in protecting their collection in light of recent thefts. You can watch a clip [here](#).



I met with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Stockholm, to discuss Sweden's application to join the NATO alliance, the latest developments in Ukraine and wider threats, where I chaired a session alongside Swedish

Defence Minister, Pal
Jonson. Good news that Turkey
has taken important steps
towards ratifying Swedish
membership of the alliance.

In other news:

-Recent employment figures have shown that 1.1 million more people are in work compared to pre-pandemic, and 4 million more than in 2010.

-[New measures](#) are being introduced to combat misuse of Nitrous Oxide, which leads to disorderly and anti-social behaviour. From November 8, users of NO2 will face 2 years in prison, with dealers facing 14 years.

-The government have [increased grants for heat pumps](#). Homes can now apply for up to £7,500 to install a heat pump, meaning they can be cheaper than gas boilers.

-The [£2 bus fare cap has been extended until December 31st 2024](#), helping people with the cost of public transport.

Parliament was finally prorogued after a mammoth session, which started when Boris Johnson was still PM and Her Majesty the Queen on the throne!

Over this session Parliament passed 39 bills. These included laws to stop the boats, bolster our energy security, and keep people safe by cracking down on disruptive protests, protecting children from harmful content online, and ensuring minimum service levels during strikes.

The closure process involved the pomp, theatrical outfits and big sticks you would expect. The [Commons published photos here](#).

The King's Speech will take place on November 7th, when the new Parliamentary Session will begin as the King lays out the coming legislative agenda for his government to carry out.

In the meantime, as ever, my team and I are here to help with any questions, concerns or queries you may have. Please do get in touch.

Best wishes
Caroline Dinenage

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