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**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT
LEE ON THE SOLENT • STUBBINGTON • HILL HEAD**



NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to 2025 and my January newsletter. Our little team have certainly hit the ground running this year and are now cheering ourselves up through the gloomy weather with the thought that it's only 50 days until the official start of spring!

This month has brought the coldest night of the winter so far and I have felt concern for the many pensioners impacted by the Government's decision to end the Winter Fuel Allowance. I am keen to establish the real impact of this legislation on senior residents in Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington, and Hill Head, so have launched a survey to collect your views. If you would like to share your own story or tell me about your friends and family, please do so [here](#).



Another survey that I have ongoing is about the use of smart phones in schools. This is in response to the Conservative amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill proposing that phones should be banned in an academic setting.

There is growing evidence that smartphones affect our children's mental health and educational attainment, but it is important to hear parents and grandparents thoughts too. My survey will take just 5 minutes and you can fill it out [here](#).

I would also encourage local people to get involved in the campaign to preserve Stubbington Study Centre. Hampshire County Council are consulting on closing the site and repurposing it to provide residential care for children with complex needs. Nobody doubts the need for investment in residential care, but this shouldn't come at the expense of existing facilities for local children.



Stubbington Study Centre is a wonderful resource, visited by 6,500 students a year and is completely self-funded. I wrote a letter to the HCC asking whether alternative sites were considered and whether everyone's views will be taken

into account, and you can read it [here](#). You can also listen to my interviews on the topic with [ITV Meridian](#), [BBC Radio](#), and Radio Victory. Local councillors are also opposing the change and you can watch our joint statement [here](#). If you would like to see this much-loved space remain a part of our community, please fill out the consultation [here](#) and sign the petition [here](#).



In other news, this month I met with the Department of Education to press the Minister for School Standards, Catherine McKinnell MP, to introduce better training for teachers on identifying and supporting neurodivergent students. When I was a Health Minister, I initiated the Oliver McGowan mandatory training for all health and social care staff in both learning disability and autism.

It has been a great success, even winning NHS awards and I think it could help make a difference in educational settings too. Paula McGowan who campaigns for these changes, joined me in this important discussion.

It has been great to catch up with so many of our younger residents this month. At Elson Junior School, I was pleased to meet the Road Safety Champions from Y5&Y6 and hear more about the Bikeability course that students take to ensure that they use their bikes safely. I also caught up with the Y6 pupils at Meoncross School to discuss their recent visit to Parliament and answer all their many and varied questions.

It was a delight to be one of the judges for Gosport Rotary Youth Speaks competition again this year. 7 teams from local secondary schools took part in this debating competition. I was incredibly impressed with the quality of their arguments and I am looking forward to welcoming the winners to join me for a visit to Parliament!



At the University of Portsmouth I met a slightly older group of students, local small business owners who were enrolled on the *Help To Grow* course. The programme was initially established by Rishi Sunak as Chancellor to support SME's to manage and grow their businesses. Over 200 have since taken part from across our area - it was great to meet a couple of the Gosport businesses and hear how they had benefited. You can find out more about these fully subsidised 12-week courses and how to join other business owners [here](#).

I also visited Solent University and met with Vice Chancellor Knowles to see their facilities and discuss the impact their work has on our area.

Back to businesses, it was a pleasure to visit Southern Plumbing Services' new showroom in Heritage Business Park. After 6 years of trading in Gosport, Sean and Nicola were delighted to offer their customers a more immersive shopping experience.

I also joined the owners of B'Eat Burger which has recently opened in Gosport High Street; offering high quality gourmet burgers using local ingredients. Their signature burgers include Smokey and The Burning One and can be ordered for delivery or to eat in the cafe.



Transport for the South East released their [Draft Transport Strategy](#) and opened a consultation to hear your views on their plans to improve transport links across our region. The consultation closes on 7th March 2025, so you have plenty of time to share your feedback [here](#).

There is one more petition that is particularly close to my heart. Regular readers know that I successfully campaigned for the establishment of the Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce alongside Charlotte Fairall from Stubbington (we are pushing the Government to resume this vital work and hope to tell you some good news very soon!).



On our path, we have listened to many personal stories, and realised that financial impact remains a huge overarching issue for cancer patients. There is now a petition calling to fast-track their benefit claims and you can sign it [here](#).

In other health matters this month, I met with the leadership team at Stubbington Surgery to discuss their plans to expand to a bigger and more appropriate building.

While the new Emergency Department at the Queen Alexandra Hospital is most welcome, concerns have been raised about the size of the patient waiting room, which I shared during a meeting with Portsmouth Hospitals management team.

We also had an update from the Integrated Care Board for Hampshire who told us that there had been nearly 50,000 more appointments than this time last year, the highest level on record and the highest level of face-to-face appointments too. Pharmacy First has had 120,000 referrals year to date.

If you have any feedback on local healthcare, please don't forget to email caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk. I can then bring your cases to the attention of ICB, NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care.

I wrote a letter to the Health Secretary to highlight the need for reform in regulation of fertility clinics. Existing laws are simply not robust enough to protect people, like clients of Apricity, going through the stress of fertility treatment. You can read my statement [here](#) and listen to my Times Radio interview with Jane and Fi [here](#).



Raising local concerns in Parliament, I challenged the local housing targets set by the Government. I believe they are unrealistic and will erase the Strategic Gap between Gosport and Fareham, worsening our air quality and overwhelming local services. You can watch my contribution in the Chamber [here](#) and read the letter I have written with neighbouring colleagues about the deep unfairness of our new housing numbers compared to Labour led areas [here](#).

I arranged a meeting between the Managing Director of FirstPort and Conservative colleagues to demand an end to constantly rising service charges amidst deteriorating quality of service. We agreed to meet again before the end of the year to monitor the improvements they have promised and will be holding a debate in Parliament to put our constituents' concerns on the record.



I signed the letter by Victoria Atkins MP requesting that fines from water companies are spent on fixing our waterways instead of filling up Treasury coffers. You can read the full letter [here](#).



In my role as chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, I spoke about the [dangers of AI](#) for the intellectual property of our creators, pushed for more [bilateral cultural agreements](#), asked about a possibility of a [Fan Led Review of Music](#) (a very decisive no from the Minister), spoke in a [debate on creative industries](#), and took part in the National Theatre panel

discussing a new report on performing arts business models. You can read the full study [here](#).

I am keenly aware that defence and security issues don't just impact our national safety, these sectors are responsible for many local jobs and livelihoods. I was pleased to hear that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary pay dispute came to a close. This is something that I have been raising in Parliament for six months. RFA plays an essential role in the operation of our Royal Navy, so it is an update that we all have long been waiting for.

In another exchange with the Defence Secretary, I asked about the readiness of our fleet and its crew in response to the worrying news about Russian

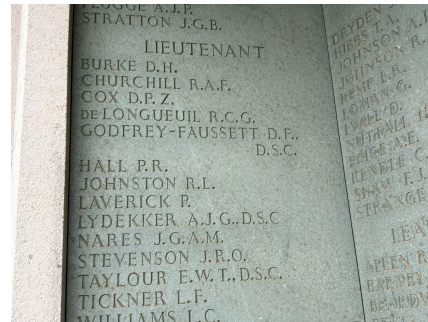
Maritime Activity. You can see what John Healey said for yourself [here](#). I am still waiting for more details.



I have committed to take the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme this year. The scheme exists to give MPs and Peers a greater understanding and appreciation of our military capabilities and capacity by spending 15 days with our armed forces.

This month I learned about Army Combat Service Support Capabilities with Queens Gurkha Logistics Corps in Aldershot and spent time at the Royal School of Military Engineering in Minley.

Back at home I met with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at the Lee Fleet Air Arm Memorial. It was extremely interesting to learn some of the personal stories behind the names and remember the bravery of those who took part in the Second World War.



I was honoured to join the Mayor's Service of Peace at the Freedom Church in Elson. In such turbulent times, this was a lovely opportunity to highlight the importance of peace in our community and around the world.



I have long been campaigning to make better use of the water around our peninsula to make journeys between Gosport, Portsmouth, Fareham and Southampton even quicker and easier. Ocean Infinity are a very successful company working around the world with semi autonomous vehicles and I dropped by their offices, a very impressive modern and sustainable site, to see what could be done to operate a water taxi in the Portsmouth Harbour. I am planning to arrange a summit with all the key players later this year to see if we can get this project off the ground.

Back in my Gosport office, we met Peter and his guide dog Stevie to talk about some of the issues blind and visually impaired people have with accessing services rest of us take for granted. It is incredibly sad to hear that 88% of guide dog owners experienced access refusal to various essential services and I am hoping to do some work in Parliament to try and tackle these issues.



There are a couple of other pressing issues that many of you have contacted me about this month:

I have received a lot of correspondence about the Hampshire County Council's decision to join the Government's Priority Programme for devolution and the potential delay this might bring to local elections. A note explaining this decision and its' impact is available [here](#).

Many of you are rightly concerned about the grooming gangs' scandal and the recent vote on a national inquiry. I have written about this in Facebook detailing what the Conservatives called for and what was the Government's response. You can read more [here](#).

So that's it for January! As ever, my team and I are here for any questions, thoughts or concerns you may have. Please do get in touch via caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk

Best wishes
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