

# Caroline Dinenage

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Your local MP reporting back from Westminster



## MP for Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington and Hill Head

I'm relieved that, as I write, summer seems to finally have arrived, yet earlier in May I had to swap my flip-flops for snow-boots when I braved freezing temperatures and polar bears on a visit to Spitsbergen in the High Arctic as part of the Science & Technology committee of the NATO PA. The unexpected consequences of diminishing polar ice caps include improved access to previously un-navigable commercial shipping routes and also vast natural resources - but this has implications on everything from Search & Rescue Helicopter provision to energy security, which my committee was sent to investigate.

One thing my Arctic experience did re-enforce was the abject bravery of the Arctic Convoy veterans of WW2, who endured those icy conditions for months on end. This month I was delighted to be invited to give my evidence to Sir John Holmes as part of the independent medal review commissioned by the Government, it's the first step towards getting the medal that the Arctic Veterans deserve and we have so long campaigned for.

Back at home, it was business as usual as I continued my visits to local voluntary organisations. It was a great pleasure to join our local RSPCA inspector, Charlotte Eyden on her rounds one afternoon. I saw firsthand the great lengths Charlotte and her colleagues go to maintain high standards of animal welfare in our community.

To celebrate Adult Learners Week, I met volunteers from 'Take Off' and the inspirational 'Read and Grow' charity who have just been awarded National Lottery funding to support their innovative work teaching adults to read. I also championed this project in a question to the Prime Minister at PMQs, highlighting the importance of adult literacy to improving social mobility.

In these times of economic belt-tightening, charity shops have really come into their own. As part of the 'Choose Charity Shops' campaign I spent a fascinating morning with the lovely ladies at the British Heart Foundation shop on Gosport High Street. We all know that charity shops thrive on donations of unwanted items from members of the public, however, many are struggling with a shortage of stock due to the rise of bogus door-to-door collectors. The key is to make sure that the doorstep collection bag is from a bone-fide local charity.



*Sailing over the Barents Sea enroute to Longyearbyen*



*RSPCA rounds with Charlotte Eyden*



*Asking PMQ on Adult Literacy*

For the latest news visit [www.caroline4gosport.co.uk](http://www.caroline4gosport.co.uk)

With other local services in mind I also visited the team at the Gosport Job Centre Plus to get a better understanding of the hard work they are doing to help local people into employment.



With job creation in mind, regular readers will know that I've made the regeneration of the Daedalus site an absolute priority, chairing monthly meetings of the Daedalus Support Group since my election. I'm delighted that planning proposals have recently been approved, which marks the next big step in realising plans for a hub of marine & aviation excellence. I was also pleased to meet with the new owners of Browdown Camp, another disused piece of Gosport's proud military heritage, to learn about their proposed ideas for the site.

As a strong supporter of the marine industry, I was honoured to attend the annual Seawork Awards for commercial maritime companies, where I presented the 'Spirit of Innovation' award.

With a focus on slightly smaller boats I was very excited to attend the QinetiQ Powerboat Challenge - where local schools are invited to design, build and race their remote-controlled speed-boats, with help from QinetiQ's brilliant engineers, before racing them on it's massive indoor water tank at Haslar (the biggest in Europe). Pupils from both Crofton & Bay House schools took part this year.



Up in Westminster, I lent my support to Abbeyfield Week 2012 by helping raise awareness of the importance of generational skills swapping. Too often we overlook how much people of all ages can learn from each other - swapping skills such as IT, reading and cookery. Working together provides an excellent opportunity to bridge the generation gap and foster both understanding & friendships.

It was a great honour and privilege to attend the service commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War in Gosport at the weekend. Our area will always have a special relationship with the Islands and the event served as a fitting tribute to all those connected with the war and a proud moment in our local history.



And talking of proud moments, I'm sure you are all as excited as I am about the forthcoming Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations and I hope you all have a wonderful jubilee weekend!

Best wishes,

*Caroline*

## GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me on any issue, or to find out when my next surgery is. It is also possible to come up to Parliament to have an official tour. I'm always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben for my constituents. Please contact my office to book at least two months in advance to make sure you get a place - the tours are very popular!

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