



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the December edition of my eNews. 2012 has been an eventful year both in Walsall and in Westminster. I have included an up to date look at my work in Parliament and in Walsall South in 2012.

I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Valerie

VALERIE QUESTIONS MANOR HOSPITAL DEATH RATES

A report from the Dr Foster Organisation has found that death rates at the Manor Hospital on two of four key measures were significantly higher than expected. Valerie has written to the Hospital's Chief Executive asking for an explanation and raised the matter in the House of Commons.

A number of constituents have contacted Valerie with concerns about the treatment they, or their relatives, have received at the Manor Hospital. Valerie has made representations to the Hospital's Chief Executive on behalf of each constituent who has raised concerns.

Valerie said: "These are very worrying findings and the Hospital must immediately investigate what has gone wrong and set out the steps it will take to cut death rates as soon as possible."



NHS QUESTION

Valerie asked the Leader of the House for an urgent debate on why £3 billion has been taken out of the NHS and not used for front-line services.

Valerie said: "In the light of recent findings regarding patient care at the Manor Hospital, it is clear that the NHS is being given insufficient resources to guarantee the highest standards of patient care. The Government must explain why this £3 billion has been taken out of the NHS."

PAT FINUCANE

Valerie has put questions to the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Prime Minister about the Government's response to the murder of Pat Finucane, in which the security services colluded.

Valerie said: "The Government must ensure that Pat Finucane's family receive the justice they deserve. The latest review into the case—the Da Silva Report—has not achieved this. The Government must do more to bring justice."

SECOND CHANCES SCHOOL



Students from the Second Chances School in Walsall South visited Parliament and were taken on a tour by Valerie.

Valerie said: "I was pleased to see the students. I took them on a tour of the Palace, including the chambers of the House of Commons and the House of Lords."

"The School's Head Teacher, Jan Concannon, told me that many of the students present had never been to Parliament before. The students learned about how Parliament works"

BENTLEY WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bentley West Primary School invited Valerie to visit the School to speak with pupils as part of Parliament Week.

Valerie said: "I began by telling the pupils a little about my work and what happens in Parliament. I showed them copies of Hansard and Early Day Motions. The pupils then took part in a mock Parliamentary debate on a motion relating to the provision of school milk. They sat on opposite sides with some pupils representing the Government and some representing the Opposition. At the end, I asked the pupils to vote on the motion by walking through 'Aye' and 'No' lobbies as we do in Parliament. The motion to provide school milk was passed by 27 to 23 votes. I was very impressed by the pupils' knowledge and interest."

HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY

Valerie co-hosted an event with Gareth Johnson MP to introduce the work of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and their recent consultation on mitochondria replacement.

Valerie said: "It was important to highlight the work of the HFEA in Parliament. As the body responsible for the regulation of fertility treatment, the HFEA plays a crucial role in informing the public and providing support for families with children conceived through IVF."

Surgeries

Valerie holds regular surgeries. To arrange an appointment, please call the Constituency Office on 01922 635835

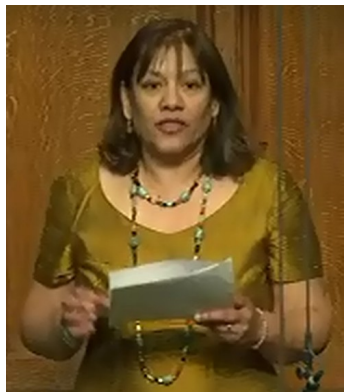
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PARKING CHARGES



Following an 18 month long campaign by Valerie and local traders, Valerie has welcomed news that the on-street parking charges on Ablewell Street and five other town centre streets have been removed.

Valerie said: "Shortly after the charges were introduced without consultation, I was contacted by traders

from Ablewell Street who were concerned about the drop in passing trade. Over the past 18 months I have made several representations to Walsall MBC, presented an 800 name petition to Parliament and raised the matter during a debate in the House of Commons. Local businesses should not have had to endure an unnecessary drop in trade over the past 18 months. The charges must now be removed from every street. I will continue to push for the charges to be dropped in every town centre street and for a proper review."

EU BUDGET

The Government was defeated on the EU budget at the end of October 2012. Valerie voted against the budget.

Valerie said: "At a time when the cost of living is rising quickly for tax payers in the UK and significant cuts are being made to vital public services, it cannot be right to increase the EU budget. This was a perverse move when governments across Europe are making big cuts in public spending."

"It is important that Britain is an active member of the EU, which is crucial for much of our trade and many of our jobs. But when EU plans are wrong for Britain, we must say so. The EU must look at savings which can be made through measures such as the reform of agricultural subsidies including the Common Agricultural Policy."

PETROL TAX



Despite voting against an Opposition motion calling for it to be scrapped, the Government has announced that the 3p per litre rise in petrol tax that was scheduled for January 2013 has been cancelled.

Valerie said: "At a time when the cost of living has been increasing rapidly and families across the country are struggling to make ends meet, I was surprised that the Government told its MPs to vote against an Opposition motion to scrap the 3p per litre rise in petrol tax as recently as 12 November 2012."

"We continued our campaign and I am pleased that the Government has been forced to reverse its position and cancelled the 3p per litre rise that was due to come into effect in January."

LEVESON REPORT

The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press published its findings and recommendations in November. Valerie has welcomed the report and called on the Government to introduce legislation for the statutory underpinning of the regulation of the press.

Valerie said: "We were all shocked when details of the phone hacking scandal emerged. It is simply not acceptable that the Press Complaints Commission could be allowed to continue as the regulator of the press when run by the press."

"I welcome Lord Leveson's measured proposals to give the self regulation of the press a statutory basis. I call on the Government to implement Lord Leveson's recommendations in full."

NEW ART GALLERY



2012 has been a successful year for the New Art Gallery and Valerie is a supporter and a fan of the NAG.

Valerie said: "After making a number of representations to WMBC, and collecting a petition of over 100 signatures, I was pleased when the Gallery brought back Sunday openings. This has boosted visitor numbers by 1,400 a month and is expected to reach 20,000 a year."

"The Gallery is one of four to be shortlisted to host the Turner Prize in 2015 and recently opened a year long exhibition of Damien Hirst's work."

VALERIE'S WORK IN PARLIAMENT

Since being elected to Parliament in May 2010, Valerie has:

- Spoken in Parliament **147** times;
- Tabled **264** written questions;
- Primary Sponsor of **85** Early Day Motions;
- Worked on **5,406** constituency cases;
- Been called **7** times at Prime Minister's Questions;
- Presented **5** petitions to Parliament;
- Published **20** reports of the Health Select Committee;
- Held **70** constituency surgeries;
- Visited or welcomed to Parliament **20** of 42 schools in Walsall South.
- Introduced **2** Ten Minute Rule Bills on equal rights for adoptive parents and a bill to improve health and education provision for children and adults with epilepsy.

Case breakdown:

