



## Valerie shows support for World Cancer Day



On Wednesday 1 February 2017, I was delighted to meet those working tirelessly to beat cancer at the World Cancer Day (WCD) event in Parliament. The theme for this year's WCD on Saturday 4 February 2017 is 'We can. I can.' and is a chance to reflect on what you can do, make a pledge and take action. Public Health England's Health Profile 2015 for Walsall says that Walsall's under 75 mortality rate for cancer is 'significantly worse than England average'. I spoke with Cancer Research UK whose pioneering work has been at the heart of progress that has seen survival rates double in the last 40 years.

## Business Questions 2 February 2017

I raised with the Leader of the House the issue that the Government failed to tell Parliament about the misfiring of a test trident missile. I called for a white paper on the Government's plan for exiting the EU and called for a vote on the final deal made by Government, so that we can protect workers' rights and EU citizens, retain tariff-free access to the single market and consult with the devolved Governments.



I called for a statement on the Prime Minister's response to the letter from 2,000 senior clinicians who said that they have reached unacceptable levels of safety concerns for their patients in the NHS, and whether hospitals are operating at safe staffing levels. On education, I raised Joseph Leckie Academy and the Government's new funding formula which will see 46% of schools losing funding. I asked for a statement on why the £384 million in the education budget has been clawed back by the treasury. I also called on the Government to support the Burmese Government in their quest for peace and to thank all Cancer researchers looking for a cure.

## Valerie visits Pleck and Pheasey Libraries



On Saturday 4 February 2017 I visited Pleck and Pheasey Library – two of the three libraries facing closure in Walsall South. I am alarmed by the prospect of closure. Libraries are not only used for lending books. At Pleck, the Library is used by an over 50s club, a knitting club and a Beginners' IT club amongst others. At Pheasey Library, there are book clubs, Lego clubs, teaching and reading classes. I also hold regular surgeries at Pheasey Library. All this risks being lost if the Library is closed. I have written to the Chancellor to ask for an increase in funding to support Walsall MBC. I have also written to Walsall MBC to ensure the views of my constituents are taken into account and that Pleck, Pheasey and South Walsall Libraries remain open.

## Valerie welcomes Moorcroft Wood and Rough Hay Primary School to Parliament

I was pleased to welcome Moorcroft Wood on Thursday 2 February 2017 and Rough Hay Primary School Year 4 to the Education Centre in Parliament on Monday 6 February 2017. I met Rough Hay Primary School (pictured right) in the Lords Space where pupils can explore a 3D model of the Chamber and follow the Yeoman Usher as he puts the mace in place before each session. The pupils had the opportunity to ask me a series of questions and to raise any concerns in Walsall South.



## Business Questions 9 February 2017



At Business Questions, I asked the Leader of the House whether there was any progress on a debate on restoration and renewal. On Brexit, I asked whether there will be a further white paper on the Great Repeal Bill and called for a statement on what the Government will do to protect those jobs and secure London's place as the No. 1 financial centre.

I called for a statement on what safeguards there will be to ensure that, as the Government negotiate trade deals around the world, so there is not a repeat of the offences committed by Rolls-Royce which admitted that it used multimillion pound bribes to secure export orders and received financial support from the Government's credit agency in 1991. I asked for a statement on Surrey-gate, whether a special deal was offered to Surrey for social care. Lastly, I called for a debate on President Trump's state visit and clarification on who issues an invitation for a state visit.

## Petition on Changes to funding for 3 and 4 year olds in Walsall South



On Thursday 9 February 2017, I presented a petition in Parliament with over 65 signatures which declares that the Government's consultation paper (Early Years Funding: changes to funding for 3 & 4 year olds 11/8/16) outlined proposals that will leave nursery schools financially non-viable, forcing them to close, and that this funding will not cover basic costs, let alone staffing with qualified teachers. The petitioners request the House of Commons to urge the Government to recognise the school status of State nursery schools and fund them accordingly.

## Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Bill

On Friday 24 February 2017 I supported and voted in favour of the Report Stage and Third Reading of Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP's (right of picture) Private Member's Bill. The Bill successfully passed Third Reading with Ayes: 138 Noes: 1. Since 2010, 17% of specialist refuges in England have closed down. The Ratification of the Istanbul Convention into UK law would help to ensure women in the UK have access to vital services and legal protections which they need to live in safety and rebuild their lives. The Government needs to stop delaying and ratify the Convention as a matter of urgency.



### Business Questions 23 February 2017



I raised with the Leader of the House the Data Protection Order 2002 which enables the processing and disclosure of sensitive data to elected representatives. I called for a debate on the Government's disgraceful increase in tuition fees by statutory instrument. The Government is presiding over the decimation of the staff at the Equality and Human Rights Commission as people have been handed redundancy notices via email. I asked the Leader

for a debate on Early Day Motion 944 on this issue.

I called on the Leader to guarantee that there will be a statement immediately following the consultation on the new funding formula and to confirm when the consultation will come to an end. The Government are not interested in businesses. Most businesses on the high street pay more in business rates than in corporation tax. I called on the Leader to ensure that there is a full impact assessment of the proposals before the changes to business rates are enacted. I also asked for a statement on the Government's plan of action to restore the NHS and listen to clinicians and staff.

### Valerie meets with the shortlisted sculptors for Emmeline Pankhurst statue



The WoManchester Statue Project is about celebrating the significant role that women have played in the city of Manchester. At present 16 out of the 17 statues in the city centre are of men. The Project launched the designs of six shortlisted sculptors in Parliament for a Emmeline Pankhurst statue on Monday 27 February 2017. I met with the sculptors who were each asked to create a 40cm bronze maquette of

their design for the statue. In the picture on the left I am standing with one of the designs by Sean Hedges-Quinn.



### Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal



I joined Marie Curie nurses, Sally Monger-Godfrey and Lib Wolley, and Harry Potter actor Jason Isaacs in Parliament on Tuesday 28 February 2017 to celebrate the launch of the Great Daffodil Appeal, Marie Curie's biggest annual fundraising campaign. Every March, millions of people across the UK support this fundraising event by giving a small donation to wear a daffodil pin. One in four people miss out on the care and support they need at the end of life. That is why I support the annual Marie Curie fundraising appeal to help enable the charity to reach more people affected by terminal illness.

### Tribute to Sir Gerald Kaufman MP

On Sunday 26 February 2017, Sir Gerald Kaufman, Father of the House and Labour MP for Manchester Gorton, sadly died aged 86. Gerald had fought on behalf of his constituents for almost 50 years.

### News in brief

#### Written Questions:

- I asked the Secretary of State for Justice, about prison officer injuries at work and how many prison officers recruited since 2015 have retained their job after a probation period.
- I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much funding his Department has provided to the Landfill Communities Fund in each of the last 5 years.

#### Policy Emails:

- This month I received policy emails on the NHS Health and Social Care debate, Rohingya crisis in Burma, unaccompanied child refugees and the sale of the Green Investment Bank.