



## GALA BATHS

In June Valerie raised the proposed closure of the Walsall Gala Baths in Walsall Town Centre at Questions to the Leader of the House. She also presented a petition of 1,938 users of the Gala Baths to Parliament.

Valerie said: "Keeping the Borough's flagship Gala Baths in the Town Centre would send the message that sports, exercise and improving people's participation in physical activity are a priority. 7.7% of adults in the Borough suffer from diabetes, 27.8% are classed as obese, only 21.8% eat healthily and only 7.8% exercise enough according to Department for Health figures. It is clearly vital that Walsall MBC takes steps to encourage many more people in the Borough to exercise."

### Queen's Speech Debate

Speaking in the debate which followed the Queen's Speech in May, Valerie said:

"I had hoped the Queen's Speech would include plans to implement the 290 recommendations of the Francis Report into events at

Stafford Hospital. Instead, the Secretary of State for Health has merely suggested the creation of a Chief Inspector of Hospitals. This was not a recommendation contained in the Francis Report and looks more like a vanity policy rather than a genuine measure to protect patients."

"The Government wants people to build conservatories, but at the same time has introduced a 'bedroom tax' forcing people out of their family homes. It is giving the companies the benefit of doubt over lunch to minimise their tax bills, yet at the same time does not give the benefit of doubt to those people who must attend ATOS assessments even if they are in a wheelchair or have other long term health conditions. Nurses and junior doctors say they need more staff, yet the Government has failed to commit to improving staffing ratios."

"The Government's new legislative agenda should be based on justice, tolerance and the rule of law, yet this is being undermined. The gracious people of this country on whose behalf the gracious speech was made deserve better."

### Legal Aid Debate

Speaking in the Backbench Debate on Legal Aid on 27 June 2013, Valerie said: "I was disappointed that the Lord Chancellor did not attend the Debate and chose not to engage with lawyers, charities and advice organisations on this issue. It is not clear what the Lord Chancellor is trying to achieve other than

undermining the legal system. The Lord Chancellor does not appear to understand that if people are given access to legal services, they do not always need to go to court. In the West Midlands 20 firms would have been given access to Legal Aid. This undermines client choice. These proposals are toxic to society and should be withdrawn."

Following the debate, the Lord Chancellor has conceded on client choice.

### Incident near Aisha Mosque, Rutter Street

Following the recent incident near the Aisha Mosque, Rutter Street, Valerie said:

"This could potentially have been a very serious incident and I am pleased that nobody was hurt. During my visit to Rutter Street on Sunday afternoon the majority of residents were returning to their homes. Residents were shocked but settled when I spoke to them. They were understandably upset that their lives should be disrupted. I would like to thank West Midlands Police for its proportionate response and Walsall MBC for providing shelter to residents who were evacuated."

### Buses on Stafford Road, Darlaston and Stanhope Way, Pheasey

On Thursday 27 June 2013, Valerie raised at Transport Questions the problem of buses using Stafford Road Darlaston and Stanhope Way, Pheasey.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Valerie said: "Stafford road and Stanhope way in my constituency are in a state of chaos owing to unco-ordinated bus services using narrow residential roads. What plans does the Minister have to look at the strategic co-ordination of bus services outside London?"

Valerie's question and the Minister's answer can be viewed on the Official Report [here](#).

### Surgeries

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

### To Contact Valerie:

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## Valerie welcomes Moorcroft Wood School to Parliament



Valerie said: "It was a pleasure to meet the students from Moorcroft Wood Primary School. The Parliament Educational Service provides a wonderful learning experience for school children of all ages. Moorcroft Wood Primary School spent the day touring Parliament and learning more about UK politics."

## Valerie Visits Shree Ram Mandir



On Friday 24 May 2013, Valerie visited the Shree Ram Mandir Hindu temple on Ford Street to take part in the Shiv Ling Pran Pratistha Mahotsov celebrations. This marked the installation of a new Shiva Ling, a representation of the deity Lord

Shiva. As part of the celebrations, the congregation processed along Ford Street and Wednesbury Road and returned to the Temple.

## Question on Green Belt Protection



Speaking in the House of Commons, Valerie Said:

"The national planning policy framework states that it is inappropriate to build on the green belt, yet a ministerial statement last September said that local plans would be fast-tracked if they included the green belt. My constituents want to know whether the green belt is safe, so may we have an urgent debate on Government guidance to local decision makers on this conflicting policy?"

Valerie's question and the Leader of the House's response can be viewed on the Official Report [here](#).

## Health Select Committee

In May and June the Health Selection Committee, of which Valerie is a member, has taken evidence on and is due to report on the following:

- Emergency services and emergency care.
- The implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- Management of long term conditions.
- Post-Legislative Assessment of the Mental Health Act 2007.

Further information regarding these enquiries is available on the website of the Health Select Committee [here](#).

## Other Questions in Parliament

In May and June, Valerie has asked questions in Parliament on;

- The situation in Burma.
- Funding for urgent building repairs at Joseph Leckie School
- The budget for medical education and research.
- Onshore wind planning policy.
- Accident and Emergency departments.

Valerie's questions and the Ministers' responses can be viewed on the Official Report [here](#).

## Caldmore Village Festival



Valerie said: "At the Caldmore Village Festival in Palfrey Park we heard from a number of very good musicians who entertained the crowd. It was good to see Palfrey Sure Start at their stall with members of staff helping us to make badges. There were many other stalls including the Charity Midland International Aid Trust. I bought plants from Caldmore Community Gardens. It was a lovely sunny but windy day."

## George Rose Community Garden



On Friday 21 June 2013, Valerie visited the George Rose Community Gardens.

Valerie said: "It was a pleasure to visit the Gardens in the planning stage. I am pleased that Kier Construction has worked with Walsall MBC's

Community Gardens Officer, Alison Bate to clear the land free of charge. Now local residents can turn this once derelict land in Darlaston into what will become a beautiful wildflower garden. The George Rose Community Gardens is a wonderful example of what can happen when the community works together."

## Darlaston SureStart Children's Centre



On Friday 14 June 2013 Valerie visited Darlaston SureStart Centre.

Valerie said: "The tremendous contribution made by SureStart Children's Centres to our communities is too often overlooked. But the impact of Darlaston SureStart Children's

Centre is immense. I was impressed by the dedication of staff, who often deal with extremely difficult situations. The Centre brings together a range of services under one roof including a day nursery, the National Childbirth Trust new parents class, a sewing group and a place where anyone can meet in a cafe largely run by volunteers. On Thursday mornings advice is available from Walsall Welfare Rights Service."

"Our SureStart Children's Centres represent a vital investment in the future of society and I hope they continue to be funded in the coming years."

## Children and Families Bill

Valerie tabled two amendments to the Children and Families Bill which had its Third Reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday 11 June 2013. However the amendments fell.

Valerie said: "I introduced two 10 Minute Rule Bills to Parliament. In 2010 I moved the Epilepsy and Related Conditions (Education and Health Services) Bill, and in 2011 I moved Adoption (Leave, pay and Allowance Arrangements) Bill."

"I am pleased that the Government has included provisions from both of my 10 Minute Rule Bills. These provisions will give adoptive parents the same entitlement to statutory leave, pay and allowances for those who are self employed as parents whose children are born to them. The Government has also included a local authority requirement to secure for a child, educational, health and care plans, in light of a having an assessment of their education, health and care need, although it has not made specific reference to epilepsy."