



## VALERIE HOLDS CENTRO MEETING FOR BEACON HEIGHTS RESIDENTS



Valerie said: "Residents contacted me following the withdrawal of the evening and Sunday bus services serving Beacon Heights. Beacon Heights is some distance from the nearest amenities and it is difficult for many of the residents, a number of whom are elderly, to get out and about when buses are not running. Centro refused my initial request for the bus to be reinstated. I then presented a petition in Parliament from the residents. There was a helpful response from the Department for Transport which indicated that the Bus Service Operator Grant may be available for the bus service."

"I arranged the meeting so that residents could explain to Centro the affect that the lack of evening and weekend bus services has on their lives. Residents made very clear that they valued the 25 service which runs from Bloxwich to Kingstanding and passes by the entrance to Beacon Heights. Residents asked that Centro look at changing the timetable of the 25 or running a trial service on Sundays. It was a constructive meeting with residents able to put to the representatives of Centro and National Express West Midlands how bus services can be improved for Beacon Heights residents."

### REMEMBRANCE



On Sunday 9 November 2014, Valerie attended the Remembrance Ceremonies at Walsall and Darlaston Cenotaphs.

Valerie said: "We must always remember and recognise the sacrifices of those who have given their lives for their fellow citizens in times of war. The ceremonies at the Cenotaphs at Walsall and Darlaston are always well attended."

"This year remembrance takes on a particular significance as it is 100 years since the start of the First World War. It is a poignant reminder of the courage and sacrifice of the millions who died in defence of our country."

### GOVERNANCE OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

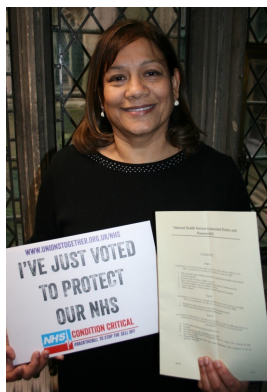


Valerie is a member of the Governance of the House select committee which has been meeting since 21 October 2014.

Valerie said: "The Committee was formed to assess the future governance of the House of Commons including the future allocation of the responsibilities for House services currently exercised by the Clerk of the House and Chief Executive. The Clerk of the House is the principal constitutional adviser to the Commons, and adviser on all its procedure and business."

"We have heard evidence from members of the staff of the House of Commons from the most junior to the most senior as well as from a wide range of Members of Parliament."

### VALERIE VOTES TO SAVE THE NHS



Valerie voted for the Second Reading of the National Health Service (Amended Duties and Powers) Bill in the House of Commons. The Bill passed its Second Reading by 241 votes 18.

Valerie said: "I voted in favour of Clive Efford MP's Bill to save the NHS. The Bill set tough controls on privatisation and abolishes competition frameworks that were implemented in the Government's Health and Social Care Act."

"As a member of the Health Select Committee I have seen from the start the process of the Health and Social Care Act and the concerns. We heard the evidence at all stages from the experts that the NHS would be open to competition and the Secretary of State was divesting himself of responsibility for the NHS. During the debate I asked what steps were taken to publish the risk register during the passage of the Health and Social Care Act as there was a concern that patient care would suffer during the £3 billion re-organisation of the NHS."

### ST MARY'S THE MOUNT



Valerie attended a thanksgiving Mass at St Mary's The Mount, Walsall on Saturday 15 November 2014 to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Sister Edith's 25 years of her First Religious Profession.

Valerie said: "It was a great privilege to be invited to join in this celebration: the Mass was celebrated by Father Salvatore, Father Justin and Father Andrew all of St Mary's. It was a joyous occasion with the Sisters providing a beautiful choir. At the end of the Mass Fr. Salvatore presented Sister Edith with an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis. Sister Edith was unaware that she would receive this gift from the Pope."

### Surgeries

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

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## VALERIE QUESTIONS HEALTH MINISTER



The Health Select Committee, of which Valerie is a member, has heard evidence this month on Integrated Care and on Public Expenditure.

Valerie said: "Clinical Commissioning Groups in Staffordshire are privatising and outsourcing cancer services and end of life care. This is part of a

ten year and £1.2 billion contract. This will have an impact on health generally, but particularly on Walsall. I asked the Minister why local people and clinicians who have expressed opposition had not been consulted. The Minister's response was not satisfactory saying that he only met with the CCGs rather than local people."

"I have found no evidence that this new system of a prime provider will work, but cancer services will be taken out of NHS hands and become the responsibility of a private provider. Local people have been saying that NHS England is taking a huge risk in an area where local health care is already distressed. The Minister has even admitted that this project might fail."

## HEALTH QUESTION



On Tuesday 25 November 2014 at Health Questions, Valerie raised the Cancer Drugs Fund.

Valerie asked: "Will the Secretary of State publish the assessment of the Cancer Drugs Fund by the chemotherapy intelligence unit before 7 May 2015?"

The Secretary of State for Health replied: "We are, on the NHS, the most transparent Government in history, and I can see no reason why we would not publish that. We are very proud of what the CDF has achieved. We are very proud that the level of cancer diagnoses has increased by more than 50% compared with what it was under the previous Labour Government, and so we are finally starting to win the battle against cancer."

## WOMEN BISHOPS EDM

The Church of England has voted to allow women to become bishops. Valerie tabled a EDM to mark this historic occasion.

Valerie's EDM on Women Bishops:

That this House welcomes the adoption by the Church of England of legislation which will allow women to be ordained as bishops in 2015; praises the work and words of the Archbishop of Canterbury who said that men and women are equally icons, witnesses and vessels of Christ for the world; notes that the first women priests were ordained in 1994; and is looking forward to welcoming the first women bishops.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA DEBATE



Valerie attended the Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons on Human Rights in Burma secured by David Burrowes MP.

Valerie said: "There remain concerns surrounding the Burmese census. Britain gave £10 million towards the census from which the Rohingya have been excluded."

"In Burma there are 75 political prisoners. Although 3,000 prisoners were released ahead of President Obama's visit, none of these were political prisoners. It is important the Government keep putting pressure on the Burmese Government for the release of the remaining political prisoners."

"Constitutional reform in Burma has taken a step backwards. There has been no progress made on amending the constitution to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to run for President in the 2015 General Election."

## PUBS VOTE

Valerie voted to protect local businesses from the predatory practices of large pub owning companies (known as pubcos) by backing a new cross-party clause to the Small Business Bill.

Valerie said: "I was pleased to vote for this cross-party clause to strengthen the Small Business Bill. The Government opposed these changes but they were defeated by 284 votes to 269. Clause 2 provides a mandatory free of tie option which allows publicans to buy beer on the open market."

"The result of this vote will ensure that large pub companies offer fair terms to their licensees and will help prevent local community pubs from closing. Under the original Bill, licensees would merely have the right to ask their pub company to show them how much their rent would be under a free of tie scheme. However, even if they revealed that the landlord would be better off free-of-tie they would have had no legal right to demand this option."

"Each week 27 pubs close and 57% of landlords who are tied to a large pubco earn less than £10,000 a year. Labour have called for greater protection for local pubs and to put a stop to unfair treatment and restrictive practices by pubcos. The result of this vote will support local businesses in Walsall South."

## CAMHS REPORT

Earlier this month the Health Select Committee, of which Valerie is a member, published their report into Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Valerie said: "I welcome the fact that all parties are now supportive of addressing mental health issues. However the Report concludes that there are serious and deeply ingrained problems with the commissioning and provision of children's and adolescents' mental health services. These problems run through the whole system from prevention and early intervention through to inpatient services for the most vulnerable young people. These need to be addressed."