



BADGER CULL

Valerie voted for the Motion to stop the planned Badger Cull. It was carried by 147 to 28.

Valerie said: "The motion called on the Government to stop the planned cull. The Government has only announced a postponement of the cull until next year."

EU BUDGET

On Wednesday 31 October, Valerie voted for an amendment calling for a real terms cut in the EU budget between 2014 and 2020. The Government was defeated by 13 Votes.

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 protect the EU budget. This would be 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 the CAP."

WE ARE WALSALL



In September Valerie spoke at the We Are Walsall event at Gallery Square in the Town Centre. The event was organised to oppose an organisation that had come to Walsall with the aim of promoting division in society.

Valerie said: "There is no place in Walsall for people who promote racist views. Our diverse communities have been living together harmoniously for many decades and will not allow themselves to be driven apart by the actions of an extremist minority."

ABLEWELL STREET PARKING CHARGES

Following an 18 month campaign against the charges, Valerie welcomed news that Walsall MBC is to abolish charges for on-street parking on Ablewell Street and five other town centre streets.

Valerie said: "Shortly after the charges were introduced, 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. It is a pity that local businesses have had to endure an unnecessary drop in trade over the past 18 months and that the charges are not being 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."

VALERIE SPEAKS ON PLANNING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Valerie raised the proposed changes to the planning rules, which were announced by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, in a Pre-Conference Adjournment Debate.

Valerie said: "The Secretary of State's statement should have given us clarity, not ambiguity. Planning inspectors will decide on applications, instead of the local authority. The problem is not the speed with which planning officers have to deal with applications, but the lack of properly qualified staff. Cuts are affecting the number of staff who can make considered decisions on planning issues. The proposals to increase the limit on the size of extensions that can be built without Planning Permission are wrong and have been rightly rejected by a number of councils. The Government's plans serve only to take power out of the hands of local people."



Valerie speaking on Planning

WALSALL MYPLACE CENTRE

Valerie visited the Walsall MyPlace youth centre in Palfrey and was given a tour of the Centre by Director Ian Cruise – Taylor.

Valerie said: "The Walsall MyPlace youth centre in Palfrey is a fantastic resource. MyPlace offers young people a variety of activities to take part in during their spare time as well as a wide range of advice services delivered by a number of different public and private sector providers. I saw students taking advantage of this who felt they had a real stake in it. They were involved in the design too."



Valerie speaking on Planning

Surgeries

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

To Contact Valerie:

Constituency Office: 114a Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1SZ
Telephone: 01922 635835

Westminster Office: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Telephone: 020 7219 7176


Email: valerie.vaz.mp@parliament.uk

VALERIE BACKS ACTION ON HEARING LOSS' "LOCATE & RATE" SERVICE

Valerie is backing Action on Hearing Loss's 'locate and rate' website which helps her constituents to find local hearing services best suited to their individual needs.

'Locate and rate' enables people with hearing loss to comment on and rate their local NHS and private hearing services in terms of service accessibility, the clarity of explanations about hearing test results, and the usefulness of advice about communication support services. To access "Locate & Rate", please click [here](#).

SUNDAY TRADING



Valerie asked the Leader of the House of Commons for clarification of the Government's position on Sunday trading.

Valerie said: "Sunday trading regulations help support small businesses by allowing them to open for longer than the larger stores over the weekend. The Government has been sending confusing messages about their plans to extend the relaxation of Sunday trading restrictions beyond the end of the Olympic and Paralympic games."


"The Leader of the House said the Government was constantly looking at the issue, but had not changed its plans."

RISING FOOD PRICES

At DEFRA Questions Valerie asked the Minister what discussions he had had with his colleagues in the Treasury and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about rising food prices.

Valerie said: "Families on incomes in the lowest one-fifth of the population have cut their consumption of fruit and vegetables by nearly a third in recent years, as the cost of food has increased by 12% in real terms according to Defra's own statistics. This has led to one in five mums going without food to feed their children according to Netmums. The Minister said he would speak with colleagues in the DWP to ensure all possible support is provided."

HEALTH QUESTIONS



At Health Questions Valerie asked the Secretary of State for Health if he would use the £4 billion surplus and the savings made in the NHS to lift pay restraints for lower-paid workers to increase morale and boost productivity.

Valerie said: "At a time when the cost of living is rising quickly many front line health staff on the lowest incomes are struggling to get by. These staff are vital to our NHS and it is crucial that they are paid enough to live on."

VALERIE VISITS ACORNS CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Valerie said: "The Acorns Children's Hospice offers a network of care for life limited and life threatened children and young people, and their families. It is the only organisation that provides this level of care to vulnerable youngsters whilst offering a range of support services to the whole family to help them cope at every stage of their child's life and beyond into bereavement. The hospice is well adapted to suit the needs of these children including a special sensory stimulation room and state of the art hoist in every bedroom. The respite care it offers for families is also a vital service."

Valerie visited the Acorns Children's Hospice and met with the Chief Executive David Strudley and Head of Care, Anne Small.

"To donate to Acorns, please telephone 01564 82 5000 or visit <http://www.acorns.org.uk>."

EPILEPSEY12 NATIONAL AUDIT REPORT



Valerie at launch of Epilepsy12 Report

Valerie spoke at the launch of the Epilepsy12 National Audit Report at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Valerie said: "This report is an excellent audit of the needs and services for children with epilepsy. The report sets out 12 specific steps that would be required to improve the quality of care. I support the 12 recommendations proposed including that children must see a paediatrician with expertise in epilepsy and that an early initial, and timely ongoing assessments should be required. This is a helpful report and monitoring of the recommendations should now prompt further action for healthcare professionals."

VALERIE QUESTIONS CQC AT SELECT COMMITTEE HEARING



Valerie at Health Select Committee

In September, the House of Commons Health Select Committee, of which Valerie is a member, heard evidence from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC is responsible for regulating all health and adult social care providers in England.

Valerie said: "Inspections are crucial to maintaining public confidence in healthcare practitioners and ensuring that abuse, such as that found at Winterbourne View cannot go undetected. I asked about the staffing levels as this was one of the Health Select Committee's concerns. The CQC told me that there were 194 inspector vacancies in April of this year. It takes 8 weeks to train an inspector and so it will take some time for all the vacancies to be filled. The CQC must urgently address this problem to ensure inspections are undertaken."

RETROSPECTIVE PRE-PAYMENT ELECTRICITY CHARGES

Valerie said: "I was contacted by a constituent who had received a retrospective electricity bill from Npower despite having a pre-payment electricity meter. I am aware that this is not an isolated incident. I wrote to Npower and Ofgem to ask why retrospective bills are sent to pre-payment customers. Npower's response does not give a clear explanation. If you receive such a Bill, I would advise you to contact Npower to challenge it."



Valerie with Mr David Strudley and Ms Anne Small