

View From the House

With the election period over, the residents of Walsall only have to cope with the leaflets advertising the local take-away rather than who their next councillor will be. Whilst I was canvassing around Walsall South, some residents were concerned that they had not received any leaflets, so I am pleased that they do not have information fatigue about the political process.

The Council election produced an uncertain result with Walsall MBC now in No overall Control (NOC) but the referendum result both in Walsall and in the majority of the United Kingdom, produced a rejection of a change to the voting system. So for now we stay with First Past the Post.

When I visited Park Hall Junior School earlier this year, the student council met with me and were keen to express their concerns about the environmental impact of chemical fertilisers. I suggested that I table an Early Day Motion (EDM) to bring their concerns to the attention of politicians in Parliament. The EDM was printed on 30th March. I hope this experience encourages the students to take an active interest in political and environmental issues in the future.

On 27 April there was an Opposition Day Debate on Sure Start Centres. Government funding for services like Sure Start and childcare in Walsall is being slashed by £70 per child next year. With four excellent centres, with dedicated and effective outreach workers, I asked the Education Secretary for assurance that these trained specialists would not be cut : the success of these centres is due to their focus on comprehensive community development.

On the same day, I presented the petition by the users of Pleck Library. The petitioners, over 1,100 local people want the library's future to be secured. The petition is a good way of registering concerns about particular issues.

I hope to have a debate in the House on Enforcement issues. Cyril Randall told me of his nightmare when he was falsely accused of throwing litter and the ensuing court case. One only has to see how the Council parking Enforcement officers lie in wait to know that with the removal of free parking in the Town Centre not only is this killing local businesses but making using local businesses a stressful experience as we battle a time deadline. I shall be raising this in Parliament.

And finally congratulations to the Saddlers who stay in League One.

Valerie Vaz MP

16 May 2011