

View From The House

We are Walsall was an inspired title to sum up the feelings of Walsall Town in response to the news the far right EDL would be coming to Walsall. The real Walsall, the community that lives and works together from diverse backgrounds came together in Gallery Square to show opposition to a group which promotes intolerance and racism.

There is no place in Walsall for the kind of people who promote racist views and who have come here from outside Walsall. 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 ignorant extremist minority.

I am pleased that so many people gathered to show the group that they are not welcome and to demonstrate Walsall people's unity in the face of such an unwelcome intrusion. I am also disappointed that the assembly of this group was allowed to go ahead.

The history of Britain is of a country that has supported many struggles. This includes the trades unions who helped fight against Franco's regime in Spain, in support of the Anti Apartheid movement which culminated in the release of Nelson Mandela and in Burma which saw Daw Suu Kyi come to Britain as an MP only this year having won the election in 1990.

Many people from groups such as the NUT, other political parties and individuals came together to promote peace, freedom and to fight against injustice. They continue to do so supporting many different issues such as for peace in the Middle East acting as hosts to Palestinians here and undertaking many charitable ventures in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I would like to thank the West Midlands Police and their colleagues from neighbouring forces for their work to minimise the disruption to shoppers and businesses. The Police and local businesses should not have had to deal with violent demonstrations. Given the history of this group I hope they are not allowed back into Walsall.

A number of constituents have told me about their experiences of their assessments by Atos. One said to me that even managing to attend the assessment has been deemed to be evidence of their ability to work. Disability Assessments should be a fair evaluation of a person's ability to work. Those who are vulnerable and unable to work must be treated fairly.

Don't forget voting for the Police and Crime Commissioner takes place on 15 November.

Valerie Vaz MP

15 October 2012