

## **View from the House.**

The talk in and around the House is about the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport's position. Evidence at the Leveson Inquiry indicated that his office had contact with News Corporation and was providing them with information on their bid for BSYKB.

In my view, there should have been no contact from a Minister's office with any bidder. A Judge or his office would not consider contacting one party and not the other in a case that would come before him/her. And so it should have been with the Secretary of State.

A Zebra walked across the zebra crossing on Darlaston Road near Hough Road. I invited Zak the Zebra from the charity Brake, to draw attention to the 5 serious incidents in the last 5 months on the crossing.

It would cost just £30,000 to change this to a signal controlled crossing. Campaigners Julie Finch and Bill Ellens collected over 300 names and in the House I presented the petition calling for a new signal control crossing. Yet Walsall Council says that there have not been enough accidents to warrant making changes. I hope they think again before there is a fatal accident.

As many of you know I opposed the Council's decision to close the New Art Gallery on Sundays in April last year. The Gallery was closed on the very days that people can visit with their families. I recently discovered there has been a change in the rateable value which could mean a business rate rebate is due to the Gallery. So the rebate could easily be used to open the Gallery to you. I am calling on the Council to reverse their decision immediately, especially as Walsall could be highlighted on the cultural map with a bid for hosting the Turner Prize.

Obesity and Diabetes are growing public health issues. I wanted to capture the information held by Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) on these issues before they are abolished in 2013, so I sent a Freedom of Information request to every PCT in England. The report I have published using the responses found that 26 per cent of adults in England are obese – a staggering 100 per cent rise in male obesity since 1993. 2.9 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes in the UK. 27.5% of people in Walsall are obese and 5.06% of people have diabetes. You can read the report on my website.

Valerie Vaz

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