

View from the House

From 25 October to 31 October, I was on the winning side in two major votes. The first, on the culling of Badgers and in the second vote we defeated the Government on the EU Budget.

The Badger debate went ahead despite the Government announcing that the cull in two pilot areas would be postponed. The vote was important because it would show the strength of opposition to the cull.

I signed up to Team Badger led by Dr Brian May who listened to the debate. Professor Krebs who led the Randomised Badger Cull Trials, said that a cull would only reduce Bovine TB in cattle by 16% over a nine year period.

More importantly Professor Krebs said it was difficult to estimate how many badgers there were. A vaccine is the best way to stop Bovine TB. This is an important issue for farmers. As well as Badger to cattle transfer there is also cattle to cattle transfer of TB so a cull would not stop the disease. The Government has to listen to a 147 to 28 vote.

So to the second defeat of the Government, this time by 13 votes. The Government wanted to agree a 2% increase in the EU budget. I voted against this proposal because it is not the time to increase budgets in Europe when the Government is pursuing an austerity budget at home.

One of the major areas that needs reforming is the Common Agricultural Policy. Savings can be made if it was reformed. The EU can't talk about subsidiarity, decisions at the most local level, and then say they will ignore the will of Parliament which is democratically elected. There needs to be a proper debate about the direction and size of the EU. Increasing the Budget without discussions about reform does not make sense.

On 15 November, Police and Crime Commissioners elections will use the Supplementary Vote system. Each voter indicates their first and second preference candidates. You do not have to give a second preference. But as always, it is very important to vote.

After 18 months of my campaigning with local businesses, the hardworking businesses in Ablewell Street, and other select areas, can see a return to free on street parking outside their shops. It caused a change in their trade. At this time businesses need customers – so do visit them and enjoy the free parking in the future.

Valerie Vaz MP