




VALERIE SPEAKS IN HEALTH DEBATE



On Wednesday 5 February 2014, Valerie spoke in the Opposition Day Debate on the NHS. Valerie said: "This debate takes place against a background of confusion and contradiction in the NHS. I hope that we will not end up with a national health disservice. We still have not heard the lesson that people and patients should be at the heart of the NHS. Chaos, confusion, contradiction, and finally, from the Secretary of State an admission. In evidence last December he said that hospitals want to employ another 4,000 nurses compared with a year ago—an admission that 4,000 nurses have gone missing on his watch. We have in the staff, patients and people of this country a group of citizens who want to save their NHS." The Official Report Transcript of Valerie's Speech is available [here](#).

Justice Question

At Justice Questions, Valerie asked the Justice Minister what guarantee he could give that both parties will have access to legal advice before and during mediation.

The Official Report transcript of Valerie's Question and the Minister's response is available [here](#).

Darlaston Town FC



Valerie said: I am delighted to have obtained a Liverpool FC shirt signed by former club captain and manager, Kenny Dalglish, to be sold at auction. It is wonderful that Kenny has taken such a close interest and agreed to sign the shirt for a worthy cause."

Tobacco Legislation

Valerie said: "On Monday 10th February, I voted in favour of two amendments to the Children and Families Bills regarding the regulation of tobacco packaging and smoking in cars with children present. I hope that these two measures will further reduce the harm caused by smoking."

Pleck Library



To mark National Libraries Day on Saturday 8 February 2014, Valerie visited Pleck Library to read from "Where the Wild things Are" by Maurice Sendak to a group of children.

Valerie said: "I was pleased to visit Pleck Library as it had been threatened with closure in 2010/11. There was a strong community campaign to save the Library. I raised the threat to the Library at an adjournment debate in the House of Commons in February 2011 and presented a petition of 1,108 names to Parliament in April 2011. While we were successful in our campaign to save Pleck Library, against a background of extensive local authority spending cuts, it is vital that we use and support our libraries. I am keen for the opening hours to be extended."

Great Barr Park

Valerie said: "I attended the public meeting on Saturday 1 February 2014 about the plans to build 59 houses on the Green Belt at Great Barr Park. Residents I spoke with were firmly opposed to the plans, which the developers are attempting to justify by promising an approximate reconstruction of Great Barr Hall as a hotel in 10 years time. It is crucial that Walsall's limited Green Belt is protected to prevent urban sprawl and the merging of Walsall, Birmingham and Sandwell. I am pleased that CPRE have are opposed to the plans I have written to WMBC to oppose the plans."

Health Committee



This month the Health Select Committee of which Valerie is a member published its reports into 'Public Expenditure' on 'Health and Social Care', and 'Public Health England'. The Committee also heard evidence on the Care.Data Database.

"As part of our report into 'Public Expenditure', the Committee heard evidence that at least 25% of the efficiency gains so far in health and social care have come from pay. This is not a sustainable strategy for the future. The Committee recommended that the current level of real terms funding for social care should be ring-fenced."

"Our report into Public Health England found that the organisation has not yet developed a clear set of priorities. Tackling alcohol misuse, smoking and the crisis of obesity are fundamental to improving the nation's health, but PHE has yet to strike the right tone when addressing these issues."

"The committee heard evidence on the Care.Data programme. Patients were not properly informed or consulted. I heard from the people running the scheme that Atos have been given the contract for the database. They were not able to say how much the contract to Atos was worth. I am concerned that there are no safeguards for patients data. People were not informed whether they could opt out or not. Given the confusion it is right that the scheme has been paused." The Health Select Committee's Reports published this month are available to view [here](#).

Walstead Road

On Friday 28 February, Valerie and residents of Walstead Road met with representatives of Walsall MBC to discuss the use of speed humps and traffic. Valerie said: "The meeting was well attended and I was pleased that residents were able to put their views directly to Council Officers. I hope the Officers will now come back with acceptable alternatives to speed humps."

Surgeries

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

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