

View from the House

Walsall MBC has still not committed to keeping the Gala Baths in the Town Centre. So on Thursday 13 June 2013 I presented a petition to Parliament signed by 1,938 users of the Gala Baths calling on Walsall MBC to keep the Gala Baths open in the Town Centre.

It seems a strange logic. The town centre can do with more people coming in, more foot fall. Many swimmers come from all around Walsall and the surrounding areas. Here is a facility, unique in the West Midlands, with its Brine pool used by many for hydrotherapy. And there is a waiting list for that service. Many who suffer with eczema find it invaluable as the chlorine from a normal swimming pool affects their skin.

They do not want the pool moved to another area. Close to the Bus Station in the centre of town, it is accessible. We must make sure that the site is not sold to yet another large retailer or supermarket.

Since 2010, I introduced two 10 Minute Rule Bills. I moved the Epilepsy and Related Conditions (Education and Health Services) Bill, and the Adoption (Leave, pay and Allowance Arrangements) Bill. I am pleased that the Government has included some of the provisions from both of these Bills in the Children and Families Bill.

The provisions were to equalise leave, pay and allowance arrangements for adoptive parents with those whose children are born to them. I tabled an amendment to the Bill is to equalise the entitlement to allowances for self-employed adopters and self-employed mothers but this was not debated.

From the Epilepsy and Related Conditions Bill, there is a local authority requirement to secure an educational, health and care plan. The amendment I tabled requires a school to request an assessment specifically for Epilepsy or related conditions. But the reference to the specific condition was not debated.

Also in the Bill there is no exemption for those fostering more than one child. They still face the bedroom tax. Carers can apply to the discretionary housing fund, but they will have to reapply every 6 weeks. This will deter foster carers from fostering more than one child at a time and impact on siblings who need fostering.

Finally, I was pleased to host a reception for the Food Standards Agency and those in the food industry. Try the Kitchen Test on the FSA website.

Valerie Vaz MP
15 June 2013