

News November 2022

Back British Farming Day



The National Farmers Union held a Back British Farming Day Parliamentary breakfast on 2 November. Farmers are a crucial part of our community, and the industry contributes more than £127 billion to the economy and creates four million jobs. In Walsall South there are 11 farms and agricultural lands make up 19%. We wore the straw sheafs at PMQs to show the contribution of farmers. The pandemic showed the importance of a resilient farming sector. supporting them enables them to uphold high standards of quality, animal welfare and environmental protection 🌀

Remembrance Day in Darlaston



I laid a wreath at the Darlaston Memorial, Victoria Road on Friday 11 November. Members of the local community in Darlaston gathered at 11 am on the 11th day of the 11th month to hear The Last Post and observe a Minute's silence. The Darlaston Memorial was unveiled in May 1927 to commemorate the soldiers and citizens lost in both world wars and other areas of conflict around the world. We will always remember them 🌀

Remembrance Day – 11 November



At Moxley War Memorial I laid a wreath on 11 November. The Memorial was erected to commemorate the 95 Moxley residents who lost their lives during the First world War. I recalled the Kohima Tribute. These words are attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds, remembering the men who were killed in the Battle of Kohima in Northeast India. The Kohima Tribute: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for their tomorrow, we gave our today. We will always remember them." 🌀

Parliament Week at Delves Junior School



In celebration of Parliament week, I was invited by Delves School Council to speak to pupils about my work in Parliament, and answer questions about my role and what motivates me. Parliament Week provides Parliamentarians with the opportunity to about discuss our work. I told them they could change things and their discussion was just a start as they will be future voters. The Council prepared a response which they delivered to the whole School the following week. Their teacher Ms Bains was instrumental in supporting the children 🌀

Remembrance Sunday – 13 November



It is 104 years since the end of the First World War and 77 years since the end of WW Two. For Remembrance Sunday, the Mayoress of Walsall MBC led a group of us to the Cenotaph in the town centre. We watched the parade of veterans, cadets, and other organisations who marched with the band to take their place in front of the Cenotaph, before observing the minutes' silence at 11 o'clock. I laid a wreath followed by the community. We watched the march past at the Town Hall. We honour everyone who died in service. 🌀

BBC Local Radio



An Urgent Question was tabled asking the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to make a statement on the BBC's announcement that they are cutting 139 jobs from local radio. I asked the Minister, "Local radio was brilliant when it questioned the previous Prime Minister. Can the Minister reassure the House that this is not a done deal, and can she update the House on her discussions with the director-general?". On 8 November, I signed an Early Day Motion which condemned the cuts. 🌀

The Peace Process in Yemen



My colleague Flick Drummond and I appeared before the Backbench Business Committee to ask for a debate on the situation in Yemen granted for 3 November in Westminster Hall, just over a month after the two warring sides failed to extend their truce. Yemen is going through a humanitarian crisis, which has left 377,000 dead and millions in need of aid. I asked the Minister a series of questions; Will he pursue every effort for an immediate ceasefire in Yemen, as well as for the implementation of the Stockholm agreement? Will he look at establishing a new international accountability mechanism for Yemen? Will the Minister, as the UK penholder, consider drafting an appropriate resolution immediately that moves the country on to a peace process? You can read my full speech here <https://www.valerievazmp.co.uk/the-peace-process-in-yemen/>. 🌀

UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly



The UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly was established by the Trade and Co-Operation Agreement 2021. The 2nd session Assembly took place on 7- 8 November; the first to be held in Westminster. Day 1 included discussions on the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and energy cooperation, we went into break-out groups to discuss policy areas. I joined the group on touring artists. Day 2 began with an address from Mr Speaker, and a report back from our break-out groups. There was a discussion on the future of Europe, and future relationship of the EU and UK. 🌀

Opposition Day Debate



HM Opposition debated two motions on 8 November 2022. The first motion "calls on the Government to commit to maintaining the state pension triple lock in financial year 2023-24 as promised in 2019.". I voted to support the motion, which was passed, Ayes: 218, Noes: 0. The second motion related to the conduct of the Home Secretary and would have ordered that a variety of security documents relating to the Home Secretary be placed before the house. I voted to support the motion, which did not pass, Ayes: 208, Noes: 300. 🌀

Valerie attends the Constituency Garden of Remembrance



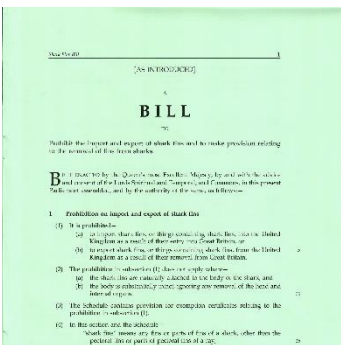
Members of Parliament were invited by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, to take part in the Constituency Garden of Remembrance. The Garden contains a Remembrance Tribute that represents each of the 650 constituencies in the United Kingdom, the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth and 14 British Overseas Territories. The crosses in the Constituency Garden represent our constituents who lost their lives in service to their country. We will always remember them. 🌀

Treasury Questions



At Treasury Questions on 15 November there were questions about cutting red tape for small and medium-size enterprises. The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill has a sunset clause for the end of 2023. All Retained EU legislation is repealed automatically. This will create a bureaucratic nightmare for businesses. I asked the Minister "When they cut the red tape and open the box, they will find 2,400 pieces of retained EU law, so what are they going to do to help small businesses navigate all the legislation that is going to drop on them at the end of next year?" 🌀

Shark Fins Bill



I sat on the Bill committee to discuss the Shark Fins Bill introduced by Christina Rees MP. The annual number of sharks killed globally by the practice is estimated to be around 97 million and the Bill follows a campaign to ban the trade in fins in the UK. Defra published a call for evidence in December 2020 on the extent of trade in shark fins in the UK and the impact of stricter trade measures; an e-petition, had over 100,000 signatures and was debated in Parliament in June 2021. The Report Stage will take place January 2023 🌀

National Security Bill, Report Stage



The National Security Bill returned to for its Report Stage on 16 November. It makes provisions around espionage, sabotage and persons acting for foreign powers. I voted for new clauses which would have added independent oversight, removed Clause 27- removes criminal liability for some actions carried out abroad by the security services. I voted against a Government amendment that set out a series of offences to which it is no longer a defence to claim modern slavery. The Bill passed its Third Reading.🌀

Labour Friends of Yemen Reception



I attended the Labour Friends of Yemen meeting on Wednesday 17 November. I spoke about the backbench Yemen debate on the 3 November. At the event, we also agreed to set up a conference on Yemen. The event was attended by shadow Middle east minister Bambos Charalambous MP, along with Paul Blomfield MP and chair Gill Furniss MP. Members of the Yemeni diaspora gave an account of life for their families in the horrific conditions.🌀

Visit of the President of South Africa



On 22 November, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, addressed both Houses in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords and paid tribute to the powerful relationship between the two countries. This follows a historic state visit from President Nelson Mandela on 11 July 1996, addressing both Houses in Westminster Hall and acknowledging the long history with the UK and its "partnership for freedom, peace, prosperity and friendship"🌀

Annual Gurburb Event in Parliament



On Tuesday 15 November I attended the annual Gurburb event in the House chaired by Preet Kaur Gill MP. Gurburb is a birth anniversary celebration marked by the holding of a festival, in Sikh tradition. It was a celebration of Sri Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburb. He was the founder of the Sikh faith and the first Sikh Guru. Members of the British Sikh community were presented with awards and recognition, and inspirational stories and lessons were shared about Guru Nanak Devi Ji's life. 🌀

NATO Parliamentary Assembly



I attended the 68th meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly which took place in Madrid on 18-21 November 2022. This is the second NATO event hosted by Spain. This was a cross-party delegation. The NATO PA provides an opportunity for parliamentarians across NATO member states to come together which is a crucial time of heightened Russian aggression against Ukraine. 🌀



I was a delegate on the Political Committee chaired by Democratic Rep Brendan Boyle. The Political Committee discussed a series of reports over the Session and voted on amendments to the draft resolution on NATO Post-Madrid Summit: Fit for Purpose in the New Strategic Era. On Sunday evening we attended the Palace hosted by the King and Queen of Spain. The plenary session took place on Monday 21 November and the Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez addressed the delegates. 🌀



President Zelenskyy spoke to us and said that we need to continue to support Ukraine. He was given a standing ovation. The Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg addressed us and answered wide ranging questions. This was the last meeting of Congressman Gerald Connolly who was elected President of the NATO PA sin 2019. 🌀



Autumn Statement



The House took time to debate the Autumn Statement on the 21 and 22 November. A number of Ways and Means Motions were then put to the House, which related to changes brought in by the statement, most of which passed without objection. Motion 3, which questioned whether to freeze the basic rate limit and personal allowance at their current amounts for the tax years 2026-27 and 2027-28, was put to a vote. I voted No, it still passed, Ayes:318 and Noes:223. 🌀

UK Infrastructure Bank Bill [Lords] Committee Stage



I sat on the Bill Committee for the UK Infrastructure Bank Bill [Lords]. The Infrastructure Bank was established in June 2021, with funding of £22 billion over its first five years. The Bank is publicly owned and provides finance to the private sector and local government for infrastructure projects. It is operating in an interim form, which means it is lacking in staff and functions. The Bill would provide the bank with statutory footing and a legislative framework. During the committee, I asked the Minister a series of questions. 🌀

Epilepsy Medications and Pregnancy



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR EPILEPSY

A FORUM FOR ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARIANS, PROFESSIONALS AND THE PUBLIC

RT Hon. Valerie Vaz MP (Chair), Caroline Ansell (Vice Chair), Cat Smith (Vice Chair),
Honess Hameed Hussein-Zee (Vice Chair), David Linden (Vice Chair), Andy McDonald (Hon. Secretary)

The APPG on Epilepsy invites you to join us and guest speakers to discuss

EPILEPSY MEDICATION AND PREGNANCY

◊ Monday 28 November 2022 ◊

◊ 3:30pm - 5:30pm ◊

◊ Macmillan Room, Portcullis House, House of Commons ◊

The visitor entrance to Portcullis House is on Victoria Embankment (postcode SW1A 2LW)
Please allow up to 30 minutes to get through security

RSVP by emailing appg@epilepsy.org.uk, or phone 0113 210 8866

Please bring a copy of this invitation with you

The APPG held a meeting on Epilepsy Medications and Pregnancy in the Macmillan Room which I chaired remotely. Speaking at the event; Daniel Jennings of Epilepsy Action, Janine Winterbottom, Advanced Nurse Specialist in Epilepsy of the Walton Centre, Rebecca Bromley, Paediatric Neuropsychologist at the University of Manchester and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and Nicola Swanborough and Nathan Draper, from Epilepsy Society. The meeting raised awareness of medication and care pathways for pregnant women. 🌀