

eNews

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

June 2023

Bentley & Darlaston North - Darlaston South - Pleck - Palfrey - Paddock - St. Matthew's - Pheasey Park Farm



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Covid 19 Inquiry: Statement on Judicial Review



The Paymaster General, Jeremy Quinn MP made a statement to the House on 5 June 2023 on the Government issuing judicial review proceedings on the COVID-19 Inquiry to prevent all documents to be disclosed to the Chair, Dame Heather Hallett. I asked the Minister why he thinks the Government should decide what is and is not relevant, rather than the chair of the inquiry, despite having said how well qualified she is. In my view it is a matter for the Chair 🌀

NFU Farmers Produce Food



I spoke to Minette Batters, President of the NFU at a Drop-in about food security and farming. Farmers are facing rising input costs, energy, fertilisers, soil improvers, animal feed. This is impacting the dairy, livestock, horticulture, and poultry sectors. There are unsustainable pressures. 🌀



Darlaston Town FC



Darlaston Town FC's put out a call for volunteers to help get the ground ready for the start of the new season. Chairman Neil Chambers helped organise the volunteers. It was good to catch up with former councillor Keith Chambers. I painted the yellow lines at the new stand. Much more remained to be done over the following 2 Saturdays. While we worked on the stands and other volunteers helped to put the new rolling goals, the team was busy practising looking ahead to the new season. 🌀

Manor Hospital Urgent & Emergency Care Opening



In January 2014 I first raised the issue of the impact of Stafford A&E's closure on Walsall A&E. I also wrote to then Prime Minister Theresa May to ask for funding for new emergency facilities and met with the Health Secretary to support the hospital's funding application. Success and at the Manor Hospital Urgent & Emergency Care official opening together with Actors from Casualty TV Stars Neet Mohan (Rashid Masum) and Charles Venn (Jacob Masters).🌀

Healthy Start Scheme Bill Drop-In



My colleague Emma Lewell Buck, MP South Shields, held a drop-in on 7 June 2023 for her bill 'The Health Eating Start Scheme (Take-up)' (No 2) Bill which would ensure families eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme are automatically registered to receive it. The Healthy Start Scheme is a lifeline for many pregnant women and families with young children providing access to healthy fruit, vegetables, milk and vitamins which helps children have the best start. Uptake across England is currently only 64%. The Bill was presented on 14 June 2023.🌀

Summer Reading Challenge 2023



The Summer Reading Challenge is back and at the Parliamentary Drop-In the Reading Agency presented the books they are donating. The Challenge encourages children aged 4-11 to keep reading during the summer holidays. The local library has details and will issue the books. In England this starts on 8 July. "Ready, Set, Read" is the games and sports theme. Children will join a fictional team as they weave their way through an obstacle course. This was developed with the Youth Sport Trust, encouraging children to engage in games and sports in a way that suits them. 🌀

Clean Air Event



I met local campaigners Let's Talk Clean Air from Whalley Range, Manchester, 7 June 2023 to hear about the campaign for environmental justice and clean air. Dr Sinead Millwood cycled to work and was shocked at the high levels of pollution. There are 6 things everyone can do: Talk to friends, family, politicians; Go local; Walk or wheel to school; Share a car; Avoid burning at home; Save green space, plant trees. The Government needs to commit to set and meet legally binding targets for NO₂ and PM_{2.5} levels that align with WHO 2021 guidelines 🌀

Carers Week 5-11 June



At the Carers Week event on 7 June, I pledged to raise awareness of unpaid carers in Walsall South. Carers Week is an annual awareness week which recognises the vital contribution made by people caring voluntarily for family members or friends who have a disability, illness, mental health condition, or who need extra help as they grow older. I back the call for more Government action in support of unpaid carers. 🌀

Dentistry Drop In

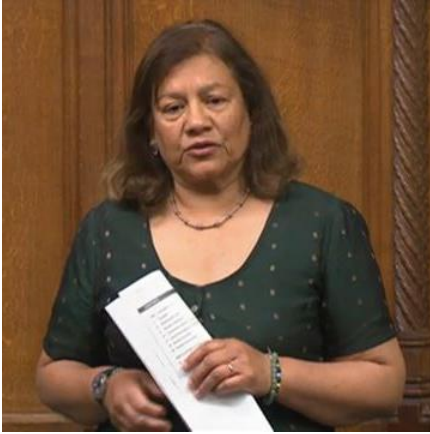


I met Eddie Crouch, Chair of the British Dental Association Executive Committee, to hear about the current state of Dentistry in England. The BDA found that NHS Dentists are at their lowest levels in a decade. Freedom of Information requests by BDA show 23,577 dentists performed NHS work in 2022/23, down 695 on the previous year, and over 1,100 down pre-pandemic. We heard about Danielle Watt from Bury St Edmonds who lived with terrible pain and could not afford private dental care. 🌀

Co-sponsoring bill on Children in Hospital for Extended Periods

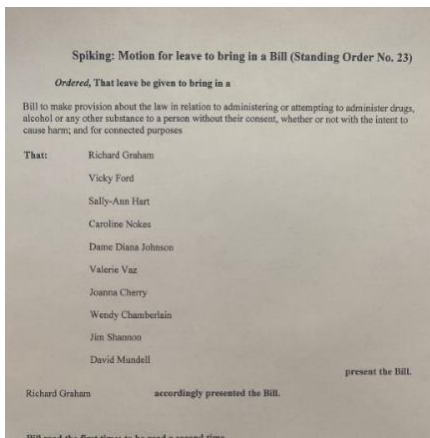
I co-sponsored a bill introduced by Sir Oliver Heald MP: "Children in Hospital for Extended Periods (Report to Parliament)" presented on 20 June 2023. The Bill calls for "the Secretary of State to report to Parliament on the merits of providing financial support for parents of children receiving care in hospital for extended periods." 🌀

Foreign Commonwealth Development Questions on NATO Unity



On 13 June 2023, at FCDO questions, I asked the Foreign Secretary: "Our ambassadors play a skilful role in NATO and I wish to place on the record my thanks to Fleur Thomas in Luxembourg, which hosted the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, for her excellent briefing. What assessment has the Foreign Secretary made of Sweden actually joining NATO, which will strengthen its unity, before the Vilnius summit?"
The Foreign Secretary replied that Sweden should join soon and aspire to have a flag-raising ceremony for Sweden to play a full part in the discussions at Vilnius." 🌀

10 Minute Rule Bill on Spiking



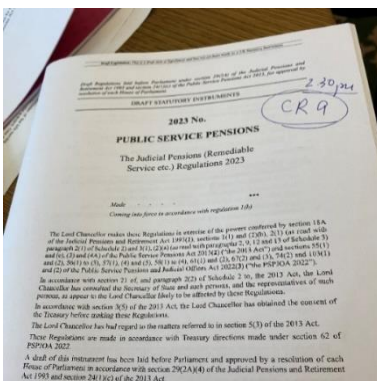
I was a co-sponsor of the Bill presented by Richard Graham MP on 13 June to make provision in relation to administering or attempting to administer drugs, alcohol, or any other substance to a person without their consent, with or without the intent to cause harm. The Second Reading of the Bill will take place on 24 November 2023. 🌀

World Blood Donor Day Drop-In Event



The event on 14 June 2023 was held to mark World Blood Donor Day and raise awareness to increase the number of registered blood donors in the UK, particularly from minority ethnic backgrounds, and was attended by several existing donors. It was good to meet campaigners of such an important cause as 18% of the UK population and 34.5% of our students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. 🌀

Statutory Instruments on Judicial Pensions



I was a member of the Delegated Legislation Committee, scrutinising the Draft Judicial Pensions (Remediable Service etc.) Regulations 2023 on 12 June 2023 following the McCloud Judgment which made changes to pensions. I asked the Minister: "How many judges this will affect and the cost of the remedial action and if it comes out of the Ministry of Justice budget?" The Minister replied that there were about 2,500 Judges affected and it would cost in the region of £170million which would come out of the Ministry of Justice Budget. 🌀

Meeting Amazon Workers in Parliament



GMB members visited Parliament on 14 June, for MPs to meet the striking workers from Amazon Coventry BHX4 fulfilment centre. In December 2022 there were 1,400 workers the GMB union had signed up to apply for recognition, but by May 2023 Amazon signed up a further 1,400 new workers in response to the growth in GMB membership. I signed the pledge board supporting the GMB's fight for union rights. Since starting a pay dispute in August 2022, the union has made significant progress in building a presence at Coventry.🌀

Education Service Event and Political Studies Association



I was a speaker at an online seminar for teachers on 20 June organised by the Education Service and Political Studies Association in the Commons. Professor Oliver Heath from Royal Holloway, Bedford New College, London University opened the seminar "Theories of Representation and How They Work in Practice". I gave an insight into the practice of representation, my work as an MP, from elections to the tools we can use to help our constituents. Education about our democracy must start early in schools.🌀

The Great Get Together



Kim Leadbeater MP, Kim and Jo's parents, Jean and Gordon hosted an event to remind us to keep people meeting and talking over tea and biscuits. Fox's, based in Batley and Spen donated biscuits. I am pictured (r) with Tan Deshi MP, Ruth Cadbury MP, Kim Leadbeater MP, Jean, Gordon Maureen & Peter. 🌀



Visit of the Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly.



It was a pleasure to meet the President of the National Assembly of Armenia, Mr Alen Simonyan, at a reception in Speaker's House. We were also able to meet with other members of the delegation and discuss Armenia's main export - wine. Both Mr Speaker and President Simonyan spoke about the important relationship between our countries which will continue. 🌀

The Como Wellbeing Manifesto



I signed the Como Wellbeing Manifesto on 28 June 2023 calling on policymakers, businesses, schools, & individuals to reappraise the ultimate goal for society 'beyond GDP' to a measure of people's wellbeing: their enjoyment of life, their sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. The manifesto was launched by economist and peer Prof Lord Richard Layard at the World Happiness Summit earlier in 2023. I agree with Lord Layard that there can be no more inspiring purpose for our lives.🌀

