

eNews

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

September 2023



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

Valerie speaks in the Adjournment Debate



I spoke in the Adjournment Debate on 19 September 2023 to raise issues to which I hope the Minister will respond: First Bescot Stadium Station and no disabled access; we need the funds immediately. I also raised the closure of railway ticket offices as the Minister in a debate said they were experts in the ticket office, so I asked why they should be moved. I also asked that any school allocated funds under 'Building Schools for the Future' which was cancelled, should be given the funds directly and should not have to bid against other schools. I asked for the Sprint Bus 2 vanity project to be cancelled and I visited Sammi, the 10-year-old who was savaged by a pit bull terrier and asked that those dogs bred to attack should be banned.

Sprint Bus Phase 2-Bus Lane on Birmingham Road



I visited Birmingham Road with my constituent Tony Gray to discuss the proposals for Phase 2. TfWM announced the "planned bus lane has been reduced in length to retain the at-risk trees on The Green. Residents were informed of a consultation on the new bus lane, proposing further road widening plans that will endanger trees and greenspace on Birmingham Road. There was no information on the website of TfWM, WMCA, WMBC, or the work on Birmingham Road. I have written to TfWM, the WMCA, and Walsall MBC. See my website for the response and my further letter to TfWM.

Opposition Day Debate: Safety of School Buildings



On Wednesday, 6 September 2023, HM Opposition held a debate on the Safety of School Buildings. There was an issue with RAAC in school buildings. The Secretary of State has written to me to say that none of the Schools in Walsall South had been affected and one was still investigating. The motion asked for the papers to find out what was known at the time. The safety of schools must be addressed by the Government; the money for schools to make the repairs must be provided to make them safe. There are schools in Walsall South which were allocated funds under Building Schools for the Future. The motion was lost by Ayes 175 to Noes 309.

Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sahib 60-Year Celebrations



I attended the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sahib Walsall celebrations on West Bromwich Road on Saturday 16 September 2023 which marked 60 years of the Gurdwara's presence in Walsall. As Walsall's first-ever Sikh temple, the Guru Nanak Gurdwara is a charitable and community hub. It was set up in 1963 by some of the first Sikh settlers in Walsall and has become a prominent place for the community, having raised thousands of pounds for local, national, and international causes. The Gurdwara hosts visitors and serves free food, known as 'langar'. I am pictured with Jag Mavi, a former trustee, and Balwinder Bath, a current trustee.

Question for the Secretary of State for Defence



I tabled a question at Defence Questions and was called at No. 8 on the Order paper. My question: "What steps he is taking to ensure the UK meets its obligations to NATO." I followed up by asking: "He will know that NATO's obligations are to work with partners, so can he say what discussions he has had with his counterparts in NATO about working with the African Union to ensure stability and security in that region?" The Minister gave a reassurance that "NATO's southern flank, Africa, is of enormous importance to Europe and the security of the Euro-Atlantic."

Show Racism the Red Card



SRRC the leading anti-racism educational charity held an event in Westminster Hall on 12 September. The Charity set up in January 1996 by Newcastle United goalkeeper Shaka Hislop, works to deliver educational workshops to young people and adults in schools, workplaces and at events held in football stadiums to over 50,000 people a year. MPs gathered to support the call to end racism. I am with former England cricketer, Monty Panesar (l), and MPs who came to support shown (r)



Energy Bill [Lords]



On Tuesday, 5 September 2023, the House debated the amendments made by the Opposition to the Energy Bill [Lords] which makes provisions about energy production and security and the regulation of the energy market, including provisions about the licensing of carbon dioxide transport and storage; about commercial arrangements for carbon capture and storage and for hydrogen production and transportation; about new technology, including low-carbon heat schemes and hydrogen grid trials; There were 5 votes on the amendments. The Bill passed its Third reading 280 to 19. I abstained on Third reading.

Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill



The House of Commons debated and voted on the consideration of Lords amendments to the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill on Monday, 4 September 2023, and I voted 5 times against the Government's motions to disagree with or amend the Lords' amendments. The Bill was introduced to make Companies House hold more reliable data concerning companies and entities registered in the UK such as limited liability partnerships (LLPs) and limited partnerships (LPs). The Bill aims to broaden the powers of Companies House to check, remove, or decline information submitted to, or already on, the register. All the Lords' amendments were disagreed to or amended and were lost.

The Daily Mile



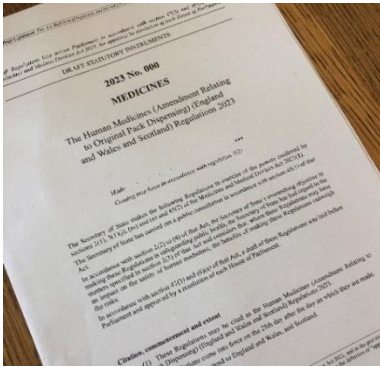
I dropped into the Daily Mile event on 5 September 2023 and met the founder, Elaine Wyllie MBE, and Gordon Banks, the founder and Global Director respectively of The Daily Mile Foundation. The Daily Mile was set up by Elaine to work with students, parents, and teachers to bring the benefits of being physically active. In Walsall South schools 4151 children take part in the Daily Mile, and the programme is proven to help children learn, feel better, and be more active with schools. I have written to all the schools to encourage them to take part in this initiative which is in addition to PE lessons.

All Party Parliamentary Group on Music



The APPG on Music met on 13 September, MPs, Peers, and industry figures. UK Music's Interim Chief Executive Tom Kiehl, Policy and Campaign Officer Dougie Brown presented UK Music's A Manifesto for Music at the meeting which has been developed over a number of months following consultation with stakeholders across the music industry, as well as music fans. This comprehensive document supported by the APPG showcases the medium to long-term music strategy for growth and will be presented to all the Party's conferences.

Human Medicines (Amendment Relating to Original Pack Dispensing) Regs 2023



As a member of the Committee scrutinising the Regulations on 5 September 2023. I asked the Minister: "The Minister gave the example of 28 days or 30 days. Will pharmacists be able to explain to patients that they will not necessarily have to take them for 30 days?". The Minister responded by saying, "Absolutely, this will often be used for repeat medication. A GP may prescribe a month's pack—which, depending on the supplier, will be for either 28 days or 30 days—but when dispensing the packs, the pharmacist will be able to give advice to patients."

Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill



The Bill returned to the Commons on Wednesday, 6 September 2023. I voted against the Government's motion to disagree with 6 Lords amendments; a vote of Ayes: 288 to Noes: 205 to Lords amendments 44D, 44E, 44F, 44G, 44H and 44J were disagreed. The Lords amendments would not remove the Commission's ability to issue immunity to an individual who comes forward and gives truthful evidence about what happened. Lords' amendment 44E is not a veto, but it would allow families of those killed or seriously injured in the troubles to have a voice in the process.

Representation of the People (Postal & Proxy Voting) (Amendment) Regs 2023

I voted against the above Regulations, as part of Business without Debate on Tuesday, 12 September. The motion stated "Police: That the draft Representation of the People (Postal and Proxy Voting etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, which were laid before this House on 6 July, be approved". The question was agreed to in a vote of Ayes 278 to Noes 148.

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Jordan



On 13 September I attended a reception with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Jordan, Ahmed Safadi, organised by the Speaker of the House of Commons. At the reception the two Speakers reiterated the good relations between our two countries and remarked on the cordial collaboration between our two parliaments. It was a pleasure meeting and speaking with Mr Safadi. His Excellency, Manar Dabbas—Jordan's ambassador to the UK – accompanied Mr Safadi and a delegation of a cross-party group of MPs, including Dina Al Bashir, one of Jordan's 15 female parliamentarians.

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Amendment) Order 2023

On Tuesday, 12 September 2023, the Government introduced a motion on Dangerous Drugs. The order proposes to bring nitrous oxide under the control of that Act as a class C drug. Following increasing reports of the harms associated with the use of nitrous oxide, the Government commissioned the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to undertake an independent assessment. The report noted concerning health harms related to nitrous oxide. I voted for the motion which was passed 404 to 36.