

eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

July/August 2024

Pleck - Palfrey - Paddock (Part of Ward) - St. Matthew's -
Blakenall - Bloxwich West - Bloxwich East - Birchills-Leamore



General Election 2024 – A Win and New Government



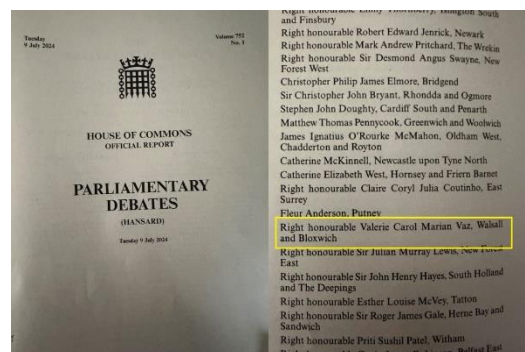
I want to thank everyone who voted in the General Election on 4 July 2024. Democracy is the winner. I was delighted to be returned as the MP for the new constituency of Walsall & Bloxwich. I also want to thank the team of supporters who made the case for returning me having been the MP for Walsall South since 2010. We now have a Labour Government and policies that were explained to the electorate, will be enacted by the Government over the coming years. I will continue to work for all my constituents, for economic and social justice and for peace both here and throughout the world. Thank you. You will always have my support. 🌐

Swearing in at The House of Commons



It was a great privilege to be sworn in on 9 July 2024 and to take the Oath holding the Jerusalem Bible. This is a process where all the new MPs have

to swear or affirm that we will uphold the law. I did so remembering my constituents in Walsall & Bloxwich. 🌐



King's Speech 17 July 2024



The new Labour Government set out the legislative programme to be followed in the first King's Speech. There are 40 new Bills. MPs are summoned to the Lords to hear the King read out the programme in what is known as the King's speech. HM King Charles III said: My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, My Government will govern in service to the country. My Government's legislative programme will be mission led and based upon the principles of security, fairness, and opportunity for all. My Lords and Members of the House of Commons Other measures will be laid before you. I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels. 🌀

Passenger Railway Services Bill (Public Ownership) Bill: Second Reading



Britain's railways are broken. This Bill is the first step to fixing the railways after decades of failed privatisation. Franchising has caused passengers misery while costing the taxpayer millions. The first Bill introduced under this Government will take our railways back into public ownership, to deliver for passengers, not shareholders. The Bill would remove the presumption in favour of franchised passenger railway services provided by the private sector, allows train operations to be provided by a public sector company when existing franchise contracts end. I was delighted to vote for the Bill which passed Second Reading: Ayes: 351 Noes: 84 🌀

Mattesley Court Bloxwich



It was a great pleasure to visit Mattesley Court, Bloxwich to meet with the residents on Friday 26 July 2024. We had an extremely useful question and answer session and I discussed policy issues and casework. The staff do an incredible job for the residents and there are great facilities. I hope to return to meet with residents again. 🌀

Walsall Pride



Walsall celebrated Walsall Pride at the Bandstand in Walsall Arboretum on Sunday 28 July. There were a number of singing acts and the crowd joined in. This is a yearly event 🌀

Guru Nanak Gurdwara Caldmore



I returned to the Guru Nanak Temple on Sunday 28 July 2024 as I promised after the General Election. The Sikh community in Walsall & Bloxwich have established the community through hard work, success and giving something back to the community and embodies the principles of the Sikh religion. The Gurdwara is open to all who need it. All the communities in Walsall take part in the Vaisakki procession a well established fixture. It was good to see the Chapel of Rest progressing. I will continue to support the community with the issues they raise with me both locally and internationally. 🌀

Perfection Food Celebration



On Sunday 28 July 2024 I joined in the celebrations at Perfection Foods, Regal Drive. There was a religious ceremony and a celebration with a gathering of the members of Balwinder and Suhkdev Bath family, their family and those who work at the factory. We also discussed the effects of leaving the EU, and new markets for their produce. It was good to be part of their celebration and I spoke about the hard work of the Bath family taking a risk to start the business and to those who worked there and made it a success. I wish them all the success for the future. 🌀

Winter Fuel Allowance and Pension Credit

I want to explain about the Government's decision and to say that **Winter Fuel Payments will continue to be provided worth £200 to households receiving Pension Credit, or £300 for households in receipt of Pension Credit with someone aged over 80.** The poorest pensioners will be protected and support will be targeted to those in greatest need and a new drive to increase take-up of Pension Credit. Everyone eligible for Pension Credit should apply for it. Work will be done urgently with charities and local councils to increase Pension Credit take-up. The commitment to merge Housing Benefit and Pension Credit will be progressed as too many people in receipt of Housing Benefit are also likely to be eligible for Pension Credit but not claiming. These steps come alongside the wider support this Government is providing to Britain's pensioners: **protecting the pensions triple lock over the next five years; helping pensioners through the Warm Homes Plan**, which will support investment in insulation and low carbon heating, upgrading millions of homes; cutting waiting times in the NHS which will help many pensioners currently waiting in pain and discomfort for treatment; and delivering the economic stability which is so crucial for pensioners. 🌀

Toxic Spill in Pleck



I was alarmed to hear of toxic spill into the canal Reservoir Place. Anochrome Ltd, a metal finishing company nearby stated that a 'chemical incident' led to them releasing the toxic matter, including Sodium Cyanide, into the canal. There were dead fish clearly visible in the Canal. 🌀

Letter to the Environment Agency



I wrote to the Environment Agency on 14 August 2024, asking key questions, including whether will be any prosecution. I visited the site on 15 August 2024, and spoke to the Police, the Canal & River Trust, and Walsall Council. I want to thank the samplers who have been regularly testing the canal water to check for chemicals. 🌀

Update on Toxic Spill



I have been updated that parts of the canal have since been reopened, and while the investigation is ongoing I urge members of the public to adhere to public safety guidelines, and to report on any new incidents, including the welfare of local wildlife, to the Environment Agency helpline: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hr Freephone service). 🌀

GCSE BTEC A levels Apprenticeships, Colleges, University

🌀 I would like to congratulate all the students who received their results for their GCSEs, Btec, and A levels. Many will be going onto further and Higher education institutions and starting apprenticeships. I wish you all the best for the future. 🌀