

eNEWS


from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

September/October 2024

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



BREAKING NEWS : Chancellor Rachel Reeves First Budget

Autumn 2024 Budget Brief	
30th October, 2024	
Key Takeaways	
Categories	
Taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Budget changes will increase taxes by £40 billion.• Capital Gains Increase: to 18% on lower rate and 24% on higher rate• Inheritance Tax threshold freeze extended to 2030• Abolition of non-dom tax regime• Windfall Tax on Oil and Gas: Increase to 38%• NO extension of income tax and NI thresholds• Implementation of VAT on private school fees• Permanently lower business rates will be introduced for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses from 2026-27.
Funding Increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• + £2.9 bn to Ministry of Defense• £3bn/year to Ukraine• Spending on State Pensions will rise 4.1% in 2025-25• NHS: £22.6bn increase in day-to-day health budget, £31bn increase in capital budget
Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers' National Insurance contributions will rise from 13.8% to 15%• Businesses will start paying at £5,000 rather than £9,100.• National Living Wage will increase by 6.7% to £12.21 for over-21s• Fuel duty freeze is extended for a year.
Tobacco and Alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.7% cut in draught duty• Implementation of a levy on vaping devices

Statement on the death of Rhiannon Whyte

This is my statement on the death of Rhiannon Whyte at Bescot Stadium Station:

"I am shocked and saddened at the death of Rhiannon and heartbroken for her family and friends. Rhiannon was a young woman committed to helping others and her loss will be deeply felt.

I want to thank the Walsall police and transport police services for their swift response. Legal proceedings must be allowed to progress unhindered against the individual charged with this crime. May Rhiannon rest in peace."

Passenger Railway Services Bill (Public Ownership) Bill – Committee Stage



On Tuesday 3 September 2024, the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill was debated in a Committee of the Whole House. The Bill would remove the presumption in favour of franchised passenger railway services being provided by the private sector, allows train operations to be provided by a public sector company when existing franchise contracts end. The Bill passed its third reading without a vote and consideration of the Bill will now continue in the House of Lords. 🌀

Christ Church Primary School, Bloxwich



The first school I visited after General Election was Christ Church C of E Primary School, Bloxwich on 6 September 2024. I met the Head, Sean Davies, and the Deputy Head Natasha Molineux. I was able to call in on the classes and met the teachers and pupils. Christ Church is a warm and welcoming School and the children were hard at work. In one class they were discussing who their hero and heroines were. The outdoor space, the forest, is part of the ethos of the School to show the importance of the environment. 🌀

Great British Energy Bill



On 5 September 2024, the GB Energy Bill had its second reading. The Bill will enable the Sec of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to create a company, Great British Energy as a legal entity. GB Energy will operate independently but will be fully owned by the Government. Its focus will be to support, promote, and get involved in producing, distributing, storing, and supplying clean energy. The Bill will allow the Department to work to cut down greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and ensure the UK's energy security. The Bill is in Committee stage from 8 October 2024. 🌀

Debate in Westminster Hall on Gaza and Aid



On Thursday 10 October 2024 I chaired the Westminster Hall debate on Gaza and Humanitarian Aid. Ayoub Khan MP introduced the debate (Birmingham Perry Barr). The motion was 'That this House has considered humanitarian aid and Gaza.' Over 20 members were able to take part in the debate and the Minister at FCDO Hamish Falconer MP responded. 🌀

St Matthew's Heritage Day



St Matthew's Church held an Open Day to encourage residents and visitors to learn about the Church and its history in Walsall. The Heritage Day was on 7 September 2024. St Matthews Church is a Grade II* listed building, as the oldest building in Walsall and main parish church of the town. Rebuilt in 1820-1821, there are some remains of the earlier church built around 1220 and dedicated to All Saints. St Matthews is in the Diocese of Lichfield. Volunteers Patti Lane (l) and Ros Clews(r) give much of their time to St Matthews. John Edlin conducts the Tours and is the archivist of St Matthews Church. 🌀

Valerie speaks in debate on Lord Darzi's Review on the NHS



I spoke in the debate on Lord Darzi's independent investigation into NHS performance on 7 October to a 3 minute time limit. The report is a benchmark for future improvement. I was a member of the Health Committee 2010 to 2015. The 2012 Act was 3 times the size of the original Act setting up the NHS. The report raises some concerns about how the ICBs—integrated care boards—operate, and their accountability. I asked for a review of ICBs. I touched on the flow of patients, Clinical negligence claims which make up 1.7% of the budget; GP contracts where doing the right thing for patients is the wrong thing for GP income. "That cannot be right."

Our mantra should be "prevention, prevention, prevention" and disparities by ethnicity. the median age at death as 62 for white people, 40 for Black people, 33 for Asian people and 30 for those from a mixed background. This is about saving lives a system that is the envy of the world, free at the point of use. We cannot afford NOT to have an NHS. 🌀

Ambassadors to the UK from the Middle East in Parliament



At a packed meeting on 8 October 2024, MPs and visitors heard from Five Ambassadors; HE Mr Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel the Ambassador of Egypt, HE Mr Omar B Al-Nahar the Ambassador of Jordan, HE Dr Husum Zomlot the Ambassador of Palestine, HE Ambassador of Lebanon Rami Mortada, HE Mr Shaikh Fawaz Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa the Ambassador of Bahrain and HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Al-Saud the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia. It was important to see the Ambassadors of the region together and

to hear how they support each other, working to facilitate a ceasefire, humanitarian aid, release of the hostages and to find a solution in the region. 🌀

Valerie visits Taylor Wimpey, Wyrley View, Goscote Lane



I was delighted to visit the Taylor Wimpey site Wyrley View, Goscote Lane, Walsall which has just been completed on 11 October 2024. The team have worked hard and managed to complete these homes in 3 years. Mark Nickols the Managing Director at Taylor Wimpey Midlands met me and explained there were 197 homes bought privately, 63 affordable so there are 33% of homes were affordable. I saw one of the unfinished homes. The Site also had a rainwater reservoir which captures rainwater, filters it, and sends it to the Canal. All the experts on Site were local and an apprentice scheme enables young people to learn skills and build a community. 🌀

Valerie Visits Greenacres Community Garden



It was good to visit the Greenacres Community Gardens on 11 October 2024. Paul Mason runs the Centre which started in 2012. The project currently has no funding. There are at present 40 plots being rented out to individuals and groups. 12 people with Learning Disabilities attending the site every day, which helps support with access to outdoors, learning new horticultural skills, building confidence, and combatting the social isolation that many disabled people face today. 22 Adults with Learning difficulties attend on a weekly basis. Paul has organised a skills certificate and those who take part have learnt gardening skills. The project also operates a garden maintenance service. The running costs are 6K a year. 🌀

Extended funding to Housing Support Fund

The Government has announced a £421 million boost to the Housing Support Fund, granted to Councils to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need with essential costs over winter, including energy and water bills, food, and other essential items. Walsall Council will receive £2,819,810.19. If you currently get benefits, they will not be affected by receiving a payment through this scheme. The fund is available now until 31 March 2025, and I urge anyone in need to visit [this website](#) for more details on eligibility and how to apply. 🌀

Valerie signs open letter on funding the Hospice Sector



I attended a pop-up charity shop in aid of Hospice Care Week on 10 October. Organised by Hospice UK, the national charity for hospice and end of life care, supporting over 200 hospices to ensure dignity for all who need hospice care. I signed the letter in support. Acorns Children's Hospice and Walsall Palliative Care Centre are based in Walsall and staff and patients alike need to be confident that all is being done to support them. They need long term committed funding. 🌀

Budget Responsibility Bill – Committee Stage



The House considered the Budget Responsibility Bill in a Committee of the Whole House on 4 September 2024. The Bill seeks to ensure that fiscal announcements of significant measures made by the Government are subject to an independent assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The OBR would produce an assessment of the impacts of fiscally significant measures, to preserve market stability & public trust. The Bill received Royal Assent on 10 September 2024 🌀

House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill



The House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill received its First Reading on 5 September 2024. The King's Speech committed to immediately reforming the House of Lords, and the Bill was introduced within 100 days of the new Government. There are 92 hereditary peers and the Bill will remove the remaining hereditary peers who will no longer have this right by the end of the parliamentary session. I am delighted the Government has followed the manifesto we stood on at the election, ensuring the Lords is fairer and more representative of the people it serves. 🌀

Westminster Hall Debate



On 11 September 2024 I chaired the debates held in Westminster Hall from 2.30pm-5.30pm. There were 3 debates: 1 Depopulation in rural areas, introduced by Torcuil Crichton (Na h-Eileanan an Iar);

2 The Oswestry to Gobowen railway line, introduced by Helen Morgan (North Shropshire); and

3 The Impact of financial fraud and economic crime, introduced by Luke Charters (York Outer). 🌀

Valerie chairs meeting on Fit and Healthy Childhood



On 22 October 2024 I chaired the first meeting of the Cross-Party Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood, 'The Children's Wellbeing Bill'. Dr Kristy Howells from Canterbury Christ Church University, Professor Kamaldeep Bhui from the University of Oxford, and Professor Paul Gately from UCEN Manchester and MoreLife UK all spoke. There are many poor health and wellbeing indicators for children and young people across the country, and I hope these discussions lead to the changes we need. 🌀

Winter Fuel Allowance



This was first introduced by the Labour government in 1997 to help tackle fuel poverty among pensioners. It is a one-off payment of between £100-£300. At the time, pensioner poverty was high and the state pension had fallen in relative value. The easiest and most cost-effective way to give pensioners the payment was to give it to all pensioners. The reform to the payment ensures the money is reallocated to the poorest pensioners who urgently need the payment. Many pensioners are entitled to Pension credit and many do not claim it. If you, or anyone you know may be eligible, I encourage you to check eligibility by following this link: www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility by calling the Pension Credit claim line at 0800 99 1234. 🌀

Valerie chairs debate on Imprisonment for Public Protection Services



On 29 October 2024 I chaired the debate held in Westminster Hall from 2.30-3.30pm. The motion, moved by Bambos Charalambous MP was 'That this House has considered imprisonment for *public protection* sentences', and was responded to by the minister, Sir Nicholas Dakin. 🌀

