

# eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

January 2025

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



**Wishing you all a Happy New Year and Happy Lunar New Year**

## **Chairing Westminster Hall Debates**



I chaired three debates in Westminster Hall on Tuesday 7 January 2025 from 2.30-5.30pm. The first debate, 'That this House has considered the fiscal impact of the Autumn Budget 2024 on Scotland' was moved by Gregor Poynton MP. The 2nd debate, 'That this House has considered Government support for town centres' was moved by Luke Murphy MP. The 3rd debate, 'That this House has considered the impact of changes to employers' National Insurance contributions on the charity sector' was moved by Joe Robertson MP.🌀

## **Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla**



I was delighted to meet the Speaker of the Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla who was elected as the Speaker in the Parliament of India. Shri Om Birla met with MPs and Peers and along with Speaker Rt Hon Sir Lindsey Hoyle MP who spoke about the special connection between our countries and how this would help in future discussions on a range of subjects and issues that affect both countries. Shri Om Birla said he was looking forward to meeting us in India.🌀

## Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill Second Reading



The second reading of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was debated on 8 January 2025. This Bill aims to improve the welfare of children through the education and care systems.

An amendment was tabled, seeking to reject the Bill altogether. The result of the division was: Ayes: 111, Noes: 364 🌀

## Information about help for Energy Debt

**Worried about energy debt?**

**How we can help**

- ▶ We offer energy debt write-off grants of up to £2,000 to households struggling with their energy bills. You do not have to be a British Gas customer to apply.
- ▶ We fund emergency fuel vouchers through our trusted partners.
- ▶ We have a network of Trust-funded money and energy advice projects across Britain.

**British Gas Energy Trust**

Since 2004 the Trust has awarded grants to families and individuals struggling to pay their bills, whilst also funding organisations to provide money and energy advice in the heart of communities across Britain.

**The first step to getting financial help is always to understand what support is available to you.**

If you are struggling with domestic gas and electricity debts owed to British Gas or other suppliers, you can apply for a grant from the Trust to clear your energy debts, up to £2,000.

We ask applicants to seek professional money advice before applying for one of our grants. There is other criteria for the funds, so please check our website carefully before applying.

**Where can I apply?**

To find support offered by the Trust, including energy debt write-off grants, visit our website: [www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

To find out more visit our website [www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

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01904 627075 | 01904 627075 | 01904 627075 | 01904 627075

## Employment Rights Bill Committee



I chaired another session of the Employment Rights Bill Committee on 14 January 2025. This session considered, among other things, increasing time limits for making claims in employment tribunals, seafarers' wages and working conditions and rates of statutory maternity pay.

On 16 January 2025, the committee had its final session and reported its conclusions to the House where it will be debated further on the next stages of the Bill. 🌀

## **Renters' Rights Bill Third Reading**



The House met on 14 January 2025 to debate on the 3 reading of the Renters' Rights Bill. I added my name to New Clause 6 and Amendments 7, 8 and 9, regarding help for care leavers, the new national database, a decent homes standard and temporary accommodation, rent stabilisation and the cost of renting. The Bill passed its third reading with the result: Ayes 440 Noes 111. 🌀

## **Tamil Festival 2025**



January marks Tamil Heritage Month, and I attended the Thai Pongal celebration in Parliament on 15 January 2025, hosted by the British Tamils Forum. There were folk dances, musical performances and Tamil traditional food, including the rice-based sweet pongal dish. The harvest festival marks the end of the winter solstice. We remembered the atrocities Tamil people faced during the genocidal war in Sri Lanka. I pledged my support for a permanent political solution for Tamils in Sri Lanka to live in peace and equal rights. 🌀

## **Evening with English Football League**



I met up with Co-Chair Walsall FC, Leigh Pomlett, at an event held by the EFL on 20 January 2025. This well supported event heard about the progress of the Football Governance Bill now in the Lords. The Culture secretary Lisa Nandy MP said she was not going to let the Lords delay the Bill. The panel Rick Parry, the Chair EFL, Minister Stephanie Peacock MP who is responsible for the Bill answered questions. Frank Lampard (pic), former Chelsea and England, now manager of Coventry City, responded to a Q&A 🌀

## **British Liver Trust**



There was a 'Love Your Liver' event in Parliament by the Trust on 21 January 2025, as part of their roadshow across the country raising awareness of liver disease which includes a free liver scan, using a FibroScan which tests how stiff your liver is, as a healthy liver is soft. Liver disease is only found when it is quite advanced. This means treatment is less likely to work, but most cases of liver disease could be prevented. Information can be found here:

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/> 🌀

## **Armed Forces Commissioner Bill Report Stage**



On 21 January 2025, the House met to debate the Bill which will establish the role and functions of the Armed Forces Commissioner and to provide them with the powers and duties required to conduct those functions, strengthening support for Armed Forces communities, and improving service life. There were three amendments moved by the opposition, which were rejected after the division. The Bill was read for the third time and passed without a division. 🌀

## **Deposit Scheme for Drinks Containers (England & Northern Ireland)**



The Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) says an estimated 12 billion plastic drinks bottles and 14 billion metal drinks cans are used in the UK every year. An environmental protection scheme was debated on 21 January 2025, approving the Regulations which will establish a Deposit Return Scheme for plastic bottles and metal drinks cans, launching on 1 October 2027 and managed by the Deposit Management Organisation. The regulations were approved: Ayes 352, Noes 75 🌀

### **Chairing the Finance Bill**



I chaired two sessions of the Finance Bill Committee on Thursday 30 January 2025. The Commons appoints Public Bill committees to consider proposed legislation in detail, line by line. The Finance Bill puts into force the resolutions put forward in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget. The proceedings of this committee were concluded at the second session. I have reported its conclusions and any amendments made to the House, where it will be debated further before being deliberated in the House of Lords. 🌀

### **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust**



27 January 2025 marked 80 years since the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. Today, many communities across the UK Holocaust Memorial Day is an opportunity for us to come together, learn from history, and stand against hatred in all its forms. By remembering the past, we can work towards a future built on understanding, respect, and unity. 🌀

### **Laying a Wreath at Gandhi Statue Parliament Square**



On 30 January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. This day, which is also known as Martyrs' Day, 'Shaheed Diwas' or 'Sarvodaya Day' is observed across India to honour those who sacrificed their lives for the nation.

I laid a wreath in remembrance with His Excellency Vikram Doraiswami, the High Commissioner for India, and Lord Meghnad Desai in Parliament Square. 🌀

