

# eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

April 2025

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



## **IKEA Parliamentary Reception**



I was delighted to host IKEA's Annual Retail Reception on 31 March. I spoke on the importance of good design which is affordable which IKEA do well. I introduced CEO and CSO of IKEA UK & Ireland, Peter Jelkeby, who spoke about the wider retail landscape in the UK and the new stores opening in the UK. IKEA's Sustainability Business Partner, Hiliary Jenkins, spoke about their 'Unwelcome Home' campaign with the charity Shelter. 🌀

## **Non-Domestic Rating (Multipliers and Private Schools) Act**



The Bill returned to the Commons on 31 March with amendments from the House of Lords. 7 amendments were chosen for debate and were rejected by the Commons. Royal Assent was given on 3 April 2025. The Act allows for setting higher multipliers for hereditaments with a rateable value or £500,000 or over. The rate will be announced in the Autumn Budget. 🌀

## **North Walsall Primary Academy visits Parliament**



It was great to meet the School on 2 April, from Blakenall who visited the Education Centre and were given the background to how Parliament works. I spoke and answered questions about my work in Parliament and in the constituency dealing with legislation and cases which covers Walsall and Bloxwich. The children had a good grasp of the passage of the Bill and the democratic process. 🌀

### **Butts Primary School visits Downing Street**



Children and staff of Butts Primary School had an early morning meeting at No 10 Downing Street on 4 April 2025. The children had a conducted tour of No10, including the dining room used for the Covid Conferences, the Cabinet Room where decisions were made. The Prime Minister Keir Starmer, despite his busy day met the children who were delighted and surprised to see him and chatted about his work. 🌀

### **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education Bill**



On 31 March 2025, the Commons considered the Bill at Third Reading. The Bill will help to introduce Skills England, a new Arm's Length Body of the Department for Education that will create a better skills system to improve productivity and access to opportunities. The Bill passed the third reading with the result: Ayes 304 Noes 62. 🌀

### **Agriculture (Delinked Payments) (Reduction) Regulations 2025**



Since leaving the EU, the Agricultural Act 2020 phased out annual payments under the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) over a seven-year period until 2027, replacing the BPS with delinked payments that are not based on the size of land owned by an individual. These Regulations continue the annual reductions made to this payment scheme. On 31 March 2025, the Regulations were voted on as the Opposition parties wanted to put this SI to a vote: The result: Ayes 296, Noes 164. 🌀

### **Busill Jones Primary receives funding for new nursery**



The Education Secretary made a statement on 2 April 2025 to announce £37 million for 300 primary schools to open and expand nurseries. I am delighted that Busill Jones Primary in Bloxwich is one of the 300 schools that have been granted funding in this first wave. The grant will create 6000 nursery places, with 4000 set to be available by the end of September. 🌀

## **Walsall Black Sisters Secure Community Lottery Funding (CLF)**



Walsall Black Sisters Collective has been meeting the health and social needs for BAME and the wider community within Walsall for over 30 years. On 7 April we celebrated a grant from CLF for a project on vulnerable women. Cllr Eileen Russell, St Matthews Ward was present. Maureen Lewis has been working hard and deserves credit for bidding for these funds for this project. 🌀

## **Product Regulation and Metrology Bill: Second Reading**



The Bill had its at Second Reading in the Commons on 1 April 2025. The Bill intends to ensure the UK is better placed to protect consumers, adapting to innovative technologies as well as reflect the shift in consumer habits. An amendment to the Bill was defeated Ayes:110 Noes 302, the question was put that the Bill be read a second time and passed its Second Reading: Ayes 303, Noes 110 and goes into a line-by-line scrutiny by a Bill committee. 🌀

## **Downing Street Community Celebration**



On 8 April 2025 I joined in celebrations with members of the Sikh community at No10 Downing Street, which was adorned with flowers and candles ahead of Vaisakhi celebrations. I attended with a constituent Louis Gill from Pleck. The Prime Minister spoke about the generosity of Gurdwaras across the UK: "A visible sign of the values of Sikhism – of compassion and courage, but also of service – or seva". 🌀

## **The Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act**



I was pleased to attend the recall of Parliament on Saturday 12 April 2025 on steel undertakings which will allow the Government to keep the blast furnaces running at British Steel and save 2,700 jobs. British Steel is a vital asset to the UK that supplies 90% of Network Rail's rail steel requirement. The Bill passed both Houses and given Royal Assent on 12 April 2025. 🌀

## **World Book Night**



The Reading Agency celebrated World Book Night on 23 April 2025. I am pictured with founder Debbie Hicks , Bobby Seagull and Gail Rebeck. The Reading Agency launched the Summer Reading Challenge, popular with children in Walsall and will be extended to the Universal Reading Challenge for the whole family to take part. You can find out more at: [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk) 🌀

## **British Coatings Federation (BCF) Drop-In Event**



BCF, represented by their President Sharon Harte and CEO Tom Bowtell (pictured left), held an event to promote the coatings industry and their 'Road to Net Zero' report on 23 April 2025. They aim to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. I was shown a demonstration of oxygen-reactive coatings used on buildings to help prevent fires spreading and buildings collapsing. 🌀

## **Chairing Delegated Legislation Fair Dealing Obligations(Pigs)Regs 2025**



On 23 April I chaired the Delegated Legislation Committee, considering the draft Regulations 2025 which was moved by Daniel Zeichner, Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The regulations aim to address supply and contractual relations between buyers of pigs and qualifying sellers. Parliament will approve it later. 🌀

## **Horticultural Trade Association Drop-In Event**



The HTA hosted a plant give-away to raise awareness of the needs of the gardening, horticulture, and green space sector on 23 April. UK environmental horticulture supported over 722,000 jobs, contributed £38 billion to the UK economy in 2023, and is projected to grow economic contributions to £51.2 billion by 2030. I am with Jennifer Pheasey Director Public Affairs HTA 🌀

## **Bank Resolution (Recapitalisation) Bill**



On 24 April, the Bill returned to the Commons for its report stage and third reading. The Bill will improve how the UK manages the collapse of banks and other financial companies. Two amendments were selected for debate. I voted against new clause 3, with the result ayes 88 noes 212 and amendment 2 with the result ayes 89 noes 230. The Bill will progress to final stages before receiving Royal Assent. 🌀

## **'Turning the Page' Report Launch by APPG Publishing**



As a Co-Chair of the APPG on Publishing, I attended the launch of the 'Turning the Page' report by the Publishers Association on 28 April. The foreword to the report was by me and Baroness Gail Rebeck DBE. The report raised the crisis in children and young people's reading for enjoyment. The recommendations aim to widen access to reading, create a culture of reading and increase engagement in reading. 🌀

## **Votes on: Eco-design, Wind and Solar Infrastructure and Driving Licences**



The House voted on motions to approve the Eco-design for Energy-Related Products and Energy Information (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2025, the Infrastructure Planning (Onshore Wind and Solar Generation) Order 2025 and the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 on 2 April. Each motion passed: Ayes 349 Noes 14; Ayes 307 Noes 100 and Ayes 304 Noes 101. 🌀

## **Parkwalk Parliamentary Launch**



Parkrun UK held a Parkwalk event on 2 April 2025 ahead of its nationwide launch to encourage people to walk in local parks and green spaces, benefitting health, mental wellbeing, social interaction, and accessibility. In Walsall I attended Parkwalk's launch at the Arboretum on 26 April 2025 with over 400 people including Cllr Eileen Russell and Thanh Huynh (left) 🌀

