

eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

March 2026

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



I would like to wish you a peaceful Easter



Bescot Stadium Station Disabled Access Campaign



On 27 February I met with Network Rail representatives and Walsall Football Supporters' Trust, Kiera Thorpe-Wood, Ray Dale and Bob Thomas, to discuss the next steps on the campaign for step-free access, which began in December 2022. There was a helpful discussion about the best and most useful infrastructure. The feasibility report is expected soon and Network Rail will discuss the outcome with us.🌀

Representation of the People Bill



The Bill had its 2nd Reading on 2 March 2026. I spoke in the debate. The main thrust of my speech was to ask for the Independence of the Electoral Commission. "I am really pleased that the Electoral Commission has got its independence back. I called for compulsory voting. I hope that the Bill will get us the public information and publicity needed to encourage people to exercise their civic duty to register and to vote." The Bill passed its 2nd Reading is now in Committee.🌀

Independence of the Electoral Commission



On 3 March 2026, [The Guardian reported](#) on the revocation of the Governmental strategic direction of the Electoral Commission and said quote: *The Labour MP Valerie Vaz said she was "delighted", adding: "A government of any kind should not be interfering with the Electoral Commission. It should get no direction from a government."*🌀

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill



The Bill returned to the House of Commons after passing its third reading in the Lords on 9 March 2026. It is now in its final stages. The Bill aims to remove barriers to opportunity in schools and improve the education system to make it safer for every child. It also seeks to strengthen regulation, improving quality of care to ensure it meets children's needs and keeps children rooted in their families and local communities where possible. to the Lords for further debate.🌀

The London Book Fair 2026-10 March 2026



The London Book Fair at Olympia is in its 55th year and brings together exhibitors, customers, publishers and readers, authors and agents, over three days. It serves as a global marketplace for rights negotiation and the sale and distribution of written content. This year there were 1005 exhibitors from all 7 continents. Film rights were secured on some books. The Publishing Industry is worth £11billion to the UK economy.🌀

Don't Steal This Book - Campaign



At the Book Fair the Publishers Association highlighted "*Don't Steal This Book*", a campaign organised by Ed Newton-Rex, a composer and campaigner for protecting artists' copyright. It has the names of nearly 10,000 authors and the rest of the pages are empty. The authors came together to publish the book as a protest against the "scraping" of their work without their permission by AI firms to train their models. I am pictured with Chris Evans MP.🌀

Meeting with Arab Ambassadors



At a meeting with Arab ambassadors on 10 March 2026 the Ambassadors spoke about the situation in the Middle East. At the meeting we heard from the Ambassadors for Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Ambassador for Lebanon, Farah Berri, (pictured) made an impassioned speech for her country showing us a photo of the rubble following the attacks on her country. The Ambassadors are working together to bring stability to the region.🌀

Valerie Chairs Westminster Hall Debates



I chaired 2 debates on 10 March 2026: on Government support for English rugby, moved by Edward Morello MP and responded to by Ian Murray MP, Minister for the Creative Industries, Media and Arts. The second motion, "That this House has considered technology sovereignty" was moved by Dame Chi Onwurah MP and responded to by Kanishka Narayan MP, the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology.🌀

Courts and Tribunals Bill



The House of Commons met on 10 March to debate and vote on the Bill, which follows recommendations from Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts, to reduce the Crown Court caseload, improve timely access to justice, and allocate resources more proportionately. The Bill was read a second time and is in a Public Bill Committee which will be brought to a conclusion on 28 April 2026.🌀

Libraries Event in Parliament



I attended the Libraries Alliance event on 11 March, which brought together a wide ranging group of people who support our Libraries both local and national and as a networking event. Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford gave a speech highlighting the importance of Libraries. In February 2025 the Government announced a fourth round of the Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) for 2025/26. The funding will be distributed by Arts Council England.🌀

Finance (No.2) Bill



The Government extended the parliamentary session to Spring 2026. This had been announced in Parliament in September 2025. This is the second Finance Bill of the 2024-26 session. On 11 March 2026, the Bill was debated in the House of Commons. The Bill was read the Third time and passed: Ayes 292, Noes 161.🌀

Menstrual and Gynaecological Health Bill



I was pleased to support the Bill presented by Abena Oppong-Asare MP; to make provision about the teaching of menstrual and gynaecological health in educational settings, providing training, guidance and resources that includes content about awareness of racial discrimination in the sector. It will also require the Secretary of State to work to increase public understanding of menstrual and gynaecological health. The Bill will be read a second time on 17 April. 🌀

Opposition Day Debates on Fuel Duty and Student Loans



The Opposition raised Fuel Duty and Student Loans during the 19th allotted day on 18 March. I support the Chancellor's steps to protect families and businesses from the impact of the conflict in the Middle East on fuel prices. It is clear that there are problems present in the student loan system, and the Government recognises that work is needed to improve it, and is committed to keeping the system under review. The motions were amended by the Government. 🌀

Portugal APPG Meeting with UK-Portugal Diplomats



As Chair of the APPG on Portugal I was pleased to welcome to Parliament on 19 March a group of 16 early-career diplomats, 8 from the UK and 8 from Portugal. The meeting complemented the UK-Portugal Joint Diplomats Training programme run by the FCDO, and to help the diplomats learn about the work of UK MPs, how we influence international affairs and diplomacy, and how the APPG on Portugal fits into parliamentary democracy. 🌀

Victims and Courts Bill and NI Contributions Lords Amendments



The bills are now in their final stages, and returned to the Commons after amendments were proposed in the Lords. The Victims and Courts Bill, which would introduce mandatory attendance at sentencing, had 7 amendments rejected. The NI Contributions bill, which applies a new charge to employer pension contributions made via salary sacrifice had 5 Lords amendments rejected. The bills have returned to the Lords for further debate. 🌀

APPG on Classical Music



The group met for its AGM on 18 March. I was re-elected Chair with Baroness Barbara Keeley as co Chair. After the AGM we heard from a guest speaker, Sarah Derbyshire MBE, CEO of Orchestras Live, a national producing organisation that connects professional orchestras with communities across England. Sarah shared her insights on devolution in England and the issues that have been addressed in the Hodge Review on social impact and investment.🌀

Joint Letter to OFCOM on the 'Manosphere'

I joined with 61 other MPs in signing Peter Lamb MP's letter to Ofcom Chief Executive, Dame Melanie Dawes, calling on her to protect men and boys from "manosphere" influencers online. In November 2025, Ofcom produced guidance addressing how platforms can take action against the specific harms affecting women and girls online, but has refused requests to undertake similar guidance for boys and men. In January, Labour MPs Alistair Strathern, Amanda Martin, Sarah Smith and Kenneth Stevenson set up the 'Labour Group for Men and Boys' to campaign on paternity rights and ensuring young men have positive role models.🌀

Covid-19 Inquiry Public Hearings



On 3 March 2026 I attended a discussion by the 'Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK' marking the final week of the Inquiry's public hearings. Panellists included Professor Naomi Fulop, director of the group, Professor Christina Pagel, Independent SAGE and UCL, Nathan Oswin, who leads the TUC's work on the Inquiry, Jolyon Maugham KC, founder of the Good Law Project and Dr John Chisholm CBE, President, BMA. The bereaved families gave their powerful testimony. 🌀

Peace Mala in Parliament



There was a drop in organised by Andrew Western MP whose local school St Matthews Primary, Stretford brought the Peace Mala Project to MPs. The Peace Mala is a symbolic double rainbow bracelet that promotes friendship, respect, and peace between people of all cultures, lifestyles, faiths, beliefs, and none. Georgina read out what each bead meant as she threaded it for me. It is a great project, teaching us all that we can respect people of all religions and none.🌀

