

eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

July/August 2026



**Beechdale, Leamore & Reedswood - Bloxwich East & Blakenall Heath -
Bloxwich West - Harden, Goscote & Ryecroft - Paddock (Part of Ward) -
Palfrey & The Delves - Pleck - Rushall-Shelfield (Part of Ward) - St. Matthew's**

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP our New Prime Minister.



I was delighted to host the then Shadow Secretary of State for Health the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP in Walsall just before the launch of the General Election in March 2015. I am pleased that our new Prime Minister who has the support of the House of Commons is our new Prime Minister and met the King on 20 July 2026. When he visited, I presented him with a Walsall FC football even though he supports Everton. 🌀

Blue Coat Secondary School Visit to Parliament



I met a Sixth Form Group with the Head Mr Smith in the Discovery Room at the Education Centre in July 2026. The thoughtful questions ranged from what I am most proud of achieving and how I became an MP. There were some students who want to study law and politics. I explained there are MPs from all backgrounds and persistence and resilience are key skills <https://www.bluecoatacademy.org>

Sixth Delegated Legislation Committee



I chaired the Sixth delegated legislation Committee on 8 July 2026 on the draft Trade Unions (Permissible Means of Voting) and Employment Rights (Unfair Dismissal) (Amendment) Order 2026 together with the draft Code of Practice on Electronic and Workplace Ballots for Statutory Trade Union Ballots." There were 2 Divisions:
Division 1: Ayes 11 Noes 4; Division 2 Ayes 11 Noes 4 🌀

Estimate Day Debates 2 days:



Debates took place on: 1 Cabinet Office working to deliver security, resilience and enable the UK to thrive; Home Office and Ministry of Justice: Government rebuilding criminal justice system with investment and reform; 3 Culture, Media and Sport: investing in major sporting events, sport in schools and communities & investing in young people; 4 Health and Social Care, 5 DWP: Gov investing in the welfare state to tackle poverty, build skills and expand opportunity 🌀

Defence Investment Plan (DIP)



On 30 June 2026, the Defence Secretary made a statement and unveiled a £298 billion Defence Investment Plan which would ensure the Armed Forces have the equipment, technology and support needed to meet growing security threats and deliver the ambitions of the Strategic Defence Review. The DIP would also enable the UK to deter adversaries and respond to a dangerous security environment. The DIP is a major step to strengthen both the UK's national security and its defence industrial base. 🌀

Objection letter to School on Reedswood Park



I have written to the Windsor Academy Trust objecting to the building of a school in Reedswood Park. I have also written to Walsall Council about extending the consultation period of the planning application as it falls within August and residents may be on holiday.

[Link to the letter on my website](#) 🌀

Council of Europe – Parliamentary Assembly



As an alternate member of the Council of Europe delegation from the UK to the Council of Europe, I attended the third part session in Strasbourg on the 22nd to the 26th of June 2026. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mr Alain Berset addressed the assembly and took questions. There was a vote for the Deputy General Secretary, which was won by Tanja Gonggrijp including other debates. 🌀

Immigration and Asylum Bill (Second Reading)



In July 2026, the Commons passed the Bill. Our country has always provided sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution. There are new capped, safe, and legal routes for genuine refugees to build a new life here, allowing communities, universities, and businesses to sponsor them. This will promote integration in and contribution to, this country. It enables asylum claim to be fair and swiftly removes those with no right to be here. 🌀

New Garden at Milton Place



On 22 July 2026 I was at the launch of the garden created and supported by whg for their residents in Milton Place. This was a fly tipping hotspot but whg have turned this into a haven. Residents can spend time enjoying nature, meeting and growing plants and vegetables. The Gazebo means residents can meet even though the weather is changeable. And the residents will look after their fabulous space 🌀

Public Office (Accountability) Bill



The remaining stages of the Bill, the Hillsborough Law, was passed on 14 July; the duty of candour applies to intelligence officers, establishing secure procedures for the disclosure of sensitive information. The Government plans to extend this duty to investigations into police misconduct, serious healthcare incidents, eg major maternity reviews, health and safety investigations, and ombudsman investigations. The Bill includes the largest expansion of legal aid granting access to non-means-tested legal aid to families at any inquest where a public authority is an interested person. 🌀

National Literacy Trust and Summer Reading Challenge



There was a drop in and meet the author on Tuesday the 30 of June where the reading agency highlighted the Summer Reading Challenge. I spoke to the author Nadia Shireen, the author of Bumble Bear, Barbara throws a wobbler and Grimwood. The reading agency are drawing attention to the year of reading, and the statistics are showing how reading for pleasure has increased. 🌀

Taxation (Energy and Vehicles) Bill Committee



The Bill was debated in July; the conflict in the Middle East has exposed British families & businesses to volatile gas prices; it allows for an increase in the rate of the Electricity Generator Levy from 45% to 55% from 1 July 2026; the rate of Approved Mileage Allowance Payments increased from 1 April 2026, a temporary 12-month Vehicle Excise Duty exemption for certain heavy goods vehicles from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027; so a typical HGV will save £600 🌀

Blakenall Gets Pride in Place Money

The Government has identified a part of Blakenall as an area that needs investment and has agreed to invest £20 million over the next ten years. The consultation is in full swing, and the leaflet explains the many ways you can get involved. You can share your views, find out more about the programme, or apply to be Chair of the Neighbourhood Board or on the Board through the website.

If you know anyone who lives in the area let them know that all ideas are welcome, big or small. This will be led by the community in Blakenall.

To find out more visit: www.blakenall.place email: info@blakenall.place 🌀

PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

The Government's Pride in Place programme is **investing £20 million** in parts of **Blakenall, Harden and Goscote** over the next ten years.

The people who live here will help decide how that money is spent.

Whether you've got five minutes or five hours, there are lots of ways to get involved. Choose what works for you.

Every conversation helps decide what happens next.

Speak to Chinwag

Have a quick chat with Chinwag, our AI helper. Tell it what you love about where you live, what you'd change and what you'd like to see happen.

Keep an eye on the website

Visit www.blakenall.place to keep up to date with what's happening, discover new ways to get involved and hear about upcoming events and community chats.

Spread the word

Know someone who cares about Blakenall, Harden or Goscote? Pass this on and help more local people join the conversation.

Play a bigger part

A group of local people will help decide how the £20 million is spent. It's called the Neighbourhood Board. Could you be one of them, including the person who leads it?

PRIDE IN PLACE

info@blakenall.place
 www.blakenall.place

What does Pride in Place mean for you?

- Decisions on how to spend this money is made locally, by us and not by government.
- A Neighbourhood Board, made up of local people, will lead the work.
- The Board must listen to residents and involve the wider community in shaping priorities.
- Funding can be used on projects that matter most to you!

What can the funding be used for?

Communities choose what to focus on. This could include things like:

- Improving high streets, local buildings, or community spaces
- Making homes warmer and more energy-efficient
- Creating jobs, training, or opportunities for young people
- Bringing people together through community events and activities
- Supporting health, wellbeing, and access to green spaces
- Making streets safer or improving transport and active travel

These are just examples; we get to decide what's right for where we live.

What is the Pride in Place Plan?

You can help shape a Pride in Place Plan, which sets out:

- A plan for how our area can improve over the next 10 years
- What improvements matter most to residents
- How funding will start being used in the first four years
- This plan will be shaped through conversations with you.

Scan to get involved or visit www.blakenall.place

GET INVOLVED

WHAT MATTERS AROUND HERE?
Scan to get involved or visit www.blakenall.place

APPG Publishing



The APPG of which I am Co-Chair held a meeting in July to disseminate the findings of the Harper Collins UK report. Alison David, Consumer Insight Director, Sam Eadrley, Sales and Marketing Director, Collins, and Jemma Offley, Strategy and Public Affairs Manager, Harper Collins presented their findings. In this Year of Reading, there is an encouragement to help children read for pleasure. The report set out the barriers and the solutions.🌀

Meeting with the Republic of Korea Ambassador



As a member of the APPG on the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Ambassador Kim Heung-chong's and his wife graciously hosted a dinner in July 2026 to discuss relations with the UK and Korea. The Chair of the APPG Sir Ed Davey chaired the discussion. I look forward to working with the Ambassador and his team to further relations between our countries.🌀

APPG Writers Group



I attended the All-Party Writers Group Summer gathering chaired by Chris Evans MP on 7 July 2026. I met the author Tony Bradman (second from right) who writes children's literature and whose Dilly the Dinosaur series has sold over two million copies. Tony is Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. As Chair of the APPG on Publishing, we discussed the year of Reading and encouraging reading for pleasure.🌀

Summer Reading Challenge at Bloxwich Library



And don't forget to encourage children to visit their Library to take part. I visited Bloxwich Library to donate some books from the Reading Agency to encourage reading to the theme designated this year as: "Read to the Beat."🌀

