

# eNEWS

from Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP

**November 2024**

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



## Peace Tree Blakenall



At the Peace Tree, The Green, Blakenall Heath on Friday 8 November 2024, I laid a wreath with Mayor of Walsall. Also present was Mike Brice CEO New Horizons, PC Bradburn former cllr for Blakenall, Ian Robertson, and children from local schools. The tree was first planted in 1919 to commemorate the end World War I 1914-1918. Prayers were said by the Revd Helen. Roy Jones read a poem, "they left their home and family often to foreign lands in search of justice freedom and peace.. the world could have been a very different place for us without their sacrifice which cannot and should not be forgotten." 🌀

## Remembrance Sunday



I planted a Cross in Speaker's Garden of Remembrance for Walsall & Bloxwich on Each MP plants a cross to remember all those who fought and died for us. At the Bloxwich service on Sunday my wreath was laid by Albert Hodgkins as I was in the Town Centre at the same time to lay my wreath at the Cenotaph.



This is an important weekend to honour those "who gave their today for our tomorrow." I laid my wreath at the Cenotaph in Walsall Town Centre on Sunday following the procession from the Town Hall to the Cenotaph. The Prayers were led by The Revd Rob Hill from St Pauls at the Crossing. At 11 am there was a 2-minute silence observed at the same time by the whole nation. 🌀

## **Budget Resolution Votes**

I hope it is helpful to set out the specific budget resolutions, ahead of the Finance Bill which give these resolutions permanent legal effect. The House voted 10 times as each resolution was put to a vote. It took over 2 hours on 6 November 2024 to complete the voting and it was good to win the vote each time.

- 1 Capital gains tax, (CGT) increasing rates to 18% or 24% on profits made from selling most things, like stocks or valuables, but not on a person's main home, coming into effect 30 October 2024. **Ayes: 401 Noes: 120**
- 2 Capital gains tax (business asset disposal relief) for raising a specific tax rate on certain business related gains, effected in a future year. **Ayes: 400 Noes: 120**
- 3 Capital gains tax (investors' relief)- Raising a tax rate on specific investment gains and lowering the tax-free amount for these gains. **Ayes: 400 Noes: 122**
- 4 Energy (oil and gas) profits levy (increase in rate) – Raising the tax rate on oil and gas profits from 35% to 38%, from 1 November 2024. **Ayes: 455 Noes: 125**
- 5 Energy (oil and gas) profits levy (relief for investment expenditure) from 1 Nov 24 companies can claim an extra 66% of qualifying decarbonization-related investment costs, not general operating/leasing costs for additional relief. **Ayes: 454 Noes: 124**
- 6 Energy (oil and gas) profits levy (period for which levy has effect) Extending the oil and gas profits tax until 31 March 2030. **Ayes: 450 Noes: 120**
- 7 Value added tax (private school fees): Changes VAT rules for private schools, making educational services subject to VAT 1 January 1, 2025. **Ayes: 383 Noes: 184**
- 8 Stamp duty land tax (additional dwellings: purchases before 1 April 2025) Updating the Stamp Duty Land Tax rates for certain residential property transactions additional dwellings, effective from 31 October 2024-1 April 2025. **Ayes: 378 Noes: 116**
- 9 Stamp duty land tax (additional dwellings: purchases on or after 1 April 2025) Increasing the rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) **Ayes: 373 Noes: 110**
- 10 Rates of alcohol duty - Amending the Finance (No. 2) Act 2023, which affects how alcohol is taxed based on its strength and type. **Ayes: 371 Noes: 77** 🌀

## **The Environmental Horticulture Manifesto**



At a drop in on 5 November held by the Horticulture Trade Association I spoke to (l) Jonathan Whittemore, Johnsons Nurseries in York and Jennifer Pheasey, Director of Public Affairs- HTA (r). about the barriers to trade with the EU. As Co-Chair of the APPG on Horticulture and Gardening I support 'The Environmental Horticulture Manifesto which sets out the actions all of us can take to ensure green spaces from gardens to public parks can be maximised.🌀

## **Lush Animal Testing Awareness Event**



At a reception held by Lush to raise awareness of the issue of animal testing in the cosmetics industry, I spoke to Hilary Jones (pictured), Global Ethics Director. As well as leading the industry in creating ethical cosmetic products, Lush campaign for an overall transition away from animal testing, calling for the appointment of a Minister for Human Relevant Science. Founded in 2012, Lush awards £250,000 annually to initiatives across science and campaigning to end animal testing. 🌀

## **25 Years celebration of The Reading Agency**

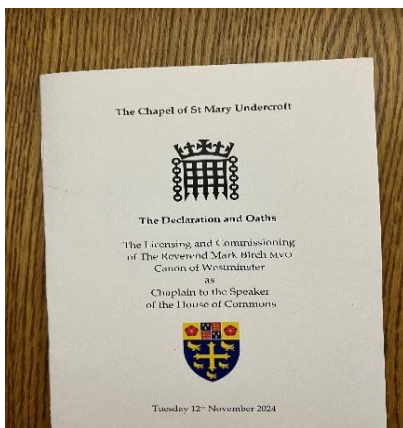


It was a packed Terrace Pavilion on 6 November 2024 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Summer reading Challenge. The Summer Reading Challenge is an important intervention which reaches 700,000 children every year helping them to enjoy reading. Alex Wharton Children's Laureate for Wales managed to get the whole pavilion repeating his poem "Jellybean." Next year the Reading Agency hopes to ensure every child participates in the Summer Reading Challenge. 🌀

## **House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill**

This Bill which passed the Third Reading on 12 November 2024, which would see the removal of all hereditary peers. All the amendments were defeated and the motion passed with Ayes: 435 and Noes: 73. This is an important first step in reforming the House of Lords. 92 hereditary peers there by birth and because they are the first-born male will no longer sit in the Lords as of right 🌀

## **Speaker's Chaplain Service**



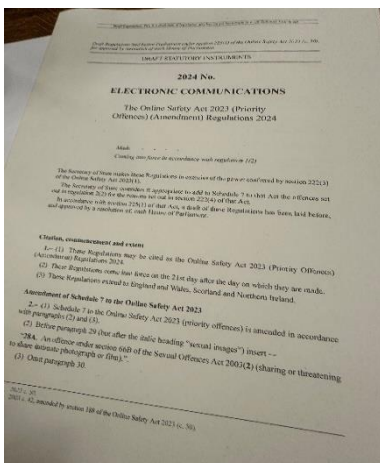
I attended the Licensing and Commissioning service of The Rev Mark Birch as Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons on 12 November. This historic role involves providing pastoral care for MPs, peers, and staff, and assisting the Speaker in leading key events in the Parliamentary calendar. Revd Mark said, 'I am looking forward to connecting with Christians and other faith groups within the parliamentary community, while ensuring Parliament's chapel, St Mary Undercroft continues to be a quiet and reflective place at the heart of the Palace of Westminster.' 🌀

## **Publishers Association Winter Event**



It was a pleasure to meet the author Richard Osman at the Publishers' Association Winter Event at the Terrace Pavilion on 12 November 2024. As Co-Chair of the APPG on Publishing, Co-Chair Baroness Gail Rebusk stressed the importance of reading. There is a worrying decline in children's reading. Perminder Mann, Bonnier Books and Chair of the Publishers Association said publishing is the heartbeat of the industry, books inspire films, films bring new readers. Richard Osman said the world wants our stories. He said we need to be wary of unchecked AI. It was good to celebrate this vital industry. 🌀

## **Delegated Legislation – Online Safety Act 2023**



I was a member of the Delegated Legislation Committee that looked at the Online Safety Act 2023 (Priority Offences) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 on 5 November 2024. The regulations amend the priority offences set out in schedule 7 to the Online Safety Act 2023. The Act repeals the offence under section 23 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress) and replaces it with new offences under section 66b of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (sharing or threatening to share intimate photograph or film). 🌀

## **Delegated Legislation Committee on the Movement of Pet Animals**



On 6 November I chaired the Delegated Legislation Committee, which considered the draft Windsor Framework (Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals) Regulations 2024 simplifies pet travel between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introducing a free lifelong travel document for pets and eliminating certain health treatments previously required. This streamlines movement, maintaining high animal welfare standards, particularly benefiting assistance dog users and frequent travellers. 🌀

## **Employment Rights Bill**



On 26 November 2024, I chaired an Evidence session of the Bill. We heard from Allen Simpson, deputy CEO UKHospitality, Neil Carberry, CEO, Recruitment & Employment Confed. Jamie Cater, Make UK, Jim Bligh, director, Food and Drink Federation; Gemma Griffin, VP global crewing DFDS, Martyn Gray, Director for Nautilus International, Mick Lynch, Gen Secretary, RMT. Paul Nowak, Gen Sec TUC; Maggi Ferncombe, Director, political strategy, and transformation for Unison; Dave Moxham, deputy gen sec STUC; Hannah Reed, Unite. Jemima Olchawski, CEO, Fawcett Society, and Joeli Brearley, founder and CEO of Pregnant Then Screwed. 🌀

## **Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill**

I voted against the Bill for these reasons: we should be celebrating advancements in medicine; patients with severe illnesses live longer, because of advancements in medicine often through therapies that slow disease progression. This is what a doctor has said about the Bill : "the UK healthcare system operates under a shared decision-making model. Patients are fully informed of the risks and benefits of their treatment options and have the right to consent to or refuse therapies."

An individual mentally capable of requesting assisted dying is also capable of choosing to decline life-prolonging treatments and instead opt for comfort care, allowing the disease to take its course. In this context, involving doctors in providing life-ending measures is contradictory and ethically problematic.

A do not resuscitate (DNR) order is a valid option for patients who do not wish to undergo further treatment and request a DNR order." "terminal illness" is not an absolute definition. Doctors say there are numerous documented cases where patients have made unexpected recoveries. This underscores the uncertainty inherent in prognostic labelling and emphasises the potential for recovery, even in seemingly hopeless situations.

Palliative care is nowhere near where we want it to be and hospices as charities struggle to get recognition and have to raise money and often legacies or donations to animal charities are more than to Hospices. Disabilities Rights UK cautioned us against the Bill. They said it is from bitter experience that words and laws do not add up to protecting people with disabilities.

If we are so divided on this issue imagine what it will do to families. As human beings we are programmed to survive;

I do not consider it is for the state to enshrine in legislation the circumstances of whether someone should live or die and for all those reasons, I voted against the Bill.

The Bill passed its second reading by Ayes: 330 Noes: 275 🌀