

Ordinary lives matter

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From John Harris in the [Guardian](#) this morning:

[E]ach time I have gone back to Walsall, what I have heard people express with the greatest regularity is a yearning for things that ought to be beyond argument: community, stability, an assurance that they will be able to plan for next year, and the year after that.

Harris' argument is simple: it is that British politics is not listening to what people really want. And to hear it you have to go - as he does - to the places where it is being said. It is doing what the economist Danny Blanchflower calls 'going walkabouts' to ignore the formulas, assumptions and preconceptions and actually observe what is really happening in life.

I have long argued that what people really want in life is enough to live on, to live in community, to have the support of family and friends and to feel that they have a purpose as a result. That's what my whole book '[The Courageous State](#)' is really all about, in a sentence.

And no one is offering these things in British politics right now. There is simply too much flag waving on left and right for most people. On the right wealth is an affront to many. On the left I get the impression from young people that they want to believe that equality in all its forms runs through the DNA of who they want to vote for, and not be flag waved as an issue because it should simply be taken as a given on which all other politics is built.

A focus on housing, education, health, jobs, local services and investment in communities is what the British want of their politics. The rest they will tolerate because the political classes want it. But politics has forgotten it is about people's ordinary lives first.

And politicians have forgotten that ordinary lives matter.