

File: Cllr Clare Coghill 3

I was raised a feminist. My family are predominantly working class Tories in the West Midlands. They're all that kind of, you know, not wanting charity, not wanting pity, gonna work, gonna dig ourselves out of whatever situation in which we find ourselves. And this relentless focus on education is the route out of things. Then I started going out with a French bloke. I decided to go and live with him in France. The gender equality situation was considerably worse. Very much a culture, this real idea that women's place was in the home, we were there to breed, and then whilst I lived there, and this was really crucial, the presidential elections in France went to the second round and all my mates were like, 'Well, I'm not going to bother voting on the first round 'cause I'm just going to vote for my socialist candidate in the second round.' Too many young people thought like that and then it was lost. It was such a slap in the face an I realised then and there, if you don't like the politics that you've got, you have to get involved ,you have a duty to do it. You just can't sit back. When I came back to the UK I joined the Labour Party, went along to meetings, I was greeted very hostilely by blokes who didn't see the point of a young woman coming along and expressing <gasps> an opinion, but then I also met some absolutely smashing people, men and women, where hugely supportive and encouraging. Then I moved to Waltham Forest. I came on the council in 2010. I was very determined then to help identify and bring forward and support women. I was involved in setting up an organisation called Waltham Forest Rising. Where Waltham Forest Rising was hugely successful was around events that we rang, but I mean Hibo Wardere, she filled the council chamber. People learnt an inordinate amount from that conversation. That then evolved into a fulltime job at the local authority, and she's now doing exceptional work and has gone on to write a book.

<End of transcript>