

👂👂 *I want the voices from Community Links to be heard more than ever. They are real, and have a sense of optimism that things can change for the better.* 👂👂



Stephen Timms

Member of Parliament for East Ham
Former Cabinet Minister

“My aspirations for the community are still really shaped by my experiences. I first came to Newham in 1976, so my experience of Newham is over the 40 years that Community Links has been here. Thousands of people had worked around the Docks, but by 1977 the Docks had almost gone, and in the years that followed the factories went as well.

I realised that what really improved people’s situations was getting a job, so that became the focus of my political ambitions ever since. That means tackling problems of underachievement, problems with schools and it means bringing jobs into the area and enabling local people to be in a position to be able to access these.

Community Links has always been very good at working with young people; if they are looking for help in Newham then Community Links is top of the list. Also, for a long period Community Links has been the only advice provider in Newham. These services are a lifeline. Sometimes the only thing people can do is find someone to talk to. Many people come to talk to me, but often I’ve had to say ‘You’d better go to Community Links’.

Early on, Community Links was a pioneer of the whole Corporate Responsibility movement and its impact has been huge. I’ve always identified Community Links as an imaginative, creative, innovative agency, bringing about the kind of change we need in our community.

I really welcome Links’ strong attention to exposing the stories of what’s happening to people in a way that can bring about change in public policy. Community Links has always provided a lot of valuable information about our

community to people like me, about the extent of problems, and they have come up with innovative ideas about what to do about them. David has been one of the leading thinkers on Early Action and you will hear people in Parliament talking about its value.

I claim responsibility for the old Town Hall being given to Community Links because I was the leader of the council in 1990. It’s certainly been a hub since Community Links has had it with thousands of people passing through its doors each year and with start-up space, people setting up countless local projects and businesses. It’s historically very significant, and we need it to continue to be a significant building at the heart of our community as well.

I think that we are quite a resilient community. We’ve always been a low-income community, but there’s never been a sense of despair. Community Links has been an important part of that sense of optimism that things can change. Many resources locally have been cut as a consequence of austerity, but Community Links has been able to adapt and come up with a new model for supporting our community; I applaud this. I want the local voices from there to be heard more than ever for public policy. They are real, have imagination and generate a sense of optimism that things can change for the better.”

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