Come on Eileen

The extraordinary local resident and community activist discusses what drives her quest to encourage citizen action and bring people together

PECKHAM VISION FOUNDER EILEEN CONN HAS CAMPAIGNED TIRELESSLY TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE PECKHAM TOWN CENTRE.

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Eileen has been fascinated to observe the changes in the topography and demographic of Peckham over the last few decades.

"What we see in Peckham today is a microcosm of the global community," she says. "Many of the people who live here have come from countries with contentious histories, or places with economic and environmental problems. So Peckham is an extremely rich place in which we understand the 21st century dynamics of human society."

Eileen’s entry point into community actions in Peckham came in 1988, when I teamed up with a group of neighbours to express concern about the noise and pollution caused by a local industrial use.

"We went to see a local MP, Sam Silkin," she remembers, "and told him what it was that should be done to set up a residents association."

"I don’t think there was anything done about the noise and pollution caused by the industrial use."

"That’s why we have this on the wall," she adds, gesturing towards a sign upon which is written "People’s Park."

"I've answered a lot of the questions I formed during the 1980s and 1990s, but Peckham Vision is invaluable for me."

As for Eileen’s connection with Peckham, that began in 1955 when a permutation in the civil service led her to move to the street she would later call home.

With her office in Whitechapel being located on the third floor, she was able to walk to work. If she had a teatime, she went to the local community centre for a cup of tea. She used to visit the local community centre for a cup of tea.

"Why did I need to understand the world? Two things drove me: one was because I grew up as a child of the 1950s and ’60s."

"I liked the size of the houses and the fact that there were no cars in the streets."

"It’s here that Peckham Vision was started when discovering how exciting it was as a way of connecting people. Eileen says: ‘I’m instinctively interested in connecting people. Then I began to take an interest in how the council was planning or turning this vast area of land in Peckham town centre into a car park.

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"The dominant experience of all the people who work in cooperatives, and initiatives is a form of organizational relationship that is very different from that in organized community action groups like Peckham Vision," she explains. "What has kept me going and motivated the feeling that there is something not right about decisions that have been made at a higher level, for example, the real, local economy is being neglected across London."

"I’m also passionate about organization and good order. When people come together they’re more likely to achieve what they want. Helping that to be more effective drives me!"

"One of the most remarkable things I’ve experienced is the community action groups’ power to change things. I understand better, I’m more optimistic and I’m an intellectual pessimist!"

"Peckham Vision is seeking local volunteers to help with our social media, basic graphics, IT, creative design and office use, with Peckham Vision being one of the direct beneficiaries.

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Eileen also mentions that she wants to support local volunteers to help with our social media, basic graphics, IT, creative design and office use, with Peckham Vision being one of the direct beneficiaries.

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