

## Neil Jameson (London Citizens)

“Christian citizens are called to work for the common good of the society we live in. It's not an optional extra or add-on to our faith, but an integral expression of that faith. It means sensing the need of the poor and vulnerable, and acting not just to alleviate their situation but to transform the structures which hold people back and down. In London Citizens we do this by organising -- building the relationships between and within our member institutions that create the power to bring about change. This is exactly what the popes mean when they call for a stronger civil society to hold the state and the market to account. The bedrock of civil society are our churches and other faith organisations: if not us, who? Through our living wage campaign -- which has lifted 5,000 families out of poverty -- or our call for a conditional amnesty for long-term undocumented migrants, which promises an end to legal limbo for destitute asylum-seekers, as well as our CitySafe and community land trust campaigns, we have shown how ordinary faithful citizens acting together can change our society for the better. Voting is a necessary but insufficient condition of political participation. Real politics begins by learning how to be public people, and acting together. It means caring enough to organise.

This year, in the run-up to the elections, our members have voted for a five-point economic agenda which grapples with the causes and the consequences of the financial crisis. In calling for an extension of the living wage, capping usurious interest rates and expanding local mutual lending we are putting forward civil society's response to the chaos and injustice of our current crisis. Let's hold our candidates to that agenda -- and put human need at the centre of our politics.”