



NORTHERN IRELAND REGIONAL OFFICE

4 September, 1998

Mr D Trimble MP
1st Minister Designate
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SS

Dear Mr Trimble,

We recently had the fortunate opportunity to meet with Dr Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. We discussed a number of issues eg Rates, Wholesaler / Publisher Rationalisation / Fragmentation, Minimum Wage and Tobacco Smuggling. During our discussions Dr Mowlam recommended that we write to you about obtaining business representation onto the Civic Forum.

I appreciate that you will not be addressing the Assembly until Tuesday 15 September 1998 and that no information is currently available on how the Civic Forum will be formed. This letter is probably amongst many letters that requests the same opportunity.

The National Federation of Retail Newsagents was formed in 1919, we currently have 900 members in Northern Ireland and form part of 25,000 members in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. The NFRN are the largest trade Association in the United Kingdom and the second largest in Europe. In total our members employ approximately 5,000 people out of the 596,000 total employed in Northern Ireland. We represent 10% of the overall retail business in the U.K. The NFRN are active in Europe, through membership of EuroCommerce.

The Northern Ireland District have twelve District Executive Members and just over forty District Council Members in Northern Ireland. All of them are extremely hard working business people with so much input to give to the economic, social and cultural issues of Northern Ireland. Within our Executive Committee we have a Parliamentary Team who are very proactive in Northern Ireland issues, which effect Independent Retailers. Such experience can only help the Civic Forum to look at issues in a different way, for instance addressing equality and equity, proofing the actions of Government and identifying new issues and commissioning research.

Please find enclosed our Annual Year Book which will you a better understanding of our organisation.

I look forward to a positive reply of the direction we should take to gain representation on to the Civic Forum. May I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your position as First Minister Designate for Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

MARGARET McCLOSKEY
REGIONAL MANAGER

Representing the Trade in The British Isles and The Republic of Ireland

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