

**GARY McMICHAEL**

UDP LEADER

UDP COUNCILLOR ON LISBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Background

In his mid-20's Mr McMichael is a financial consultant. Educated locally at Wallace High School, Lisburn. Involved in community politics from the age of 17, he co-founded the Lower Lisburn Community Group, which established a Community House in Hillhall, Lisburn in 1987. His father, John McMichael, a UDA Commander and author of 'Common Sense' - a document designed to encourage a move away from terrorism into democratic politics by the UDA - was murdered by PIRA in 1987. He took up his father's mantle from that time on and in 1988 co-founded the UDP (Ulster Democratic Party), retaining 'Common Sense' as the backbone of the fledgling party's political analysis. His friend Ray Smallwoods, another leading light in the UDP, was also murdered by PIRA prior to 1993 Council elections at which Mr McMichael stood for the first time and was elected to Lisburn Borough Council. He was the UDP's sole elected representative until several DUP defectors in Newtownabbey joined the party in December 1994.

A member of the Loyalist delegation involved in exploratory dialogue (LXD) with HMG.

Personality and Political Views

Closely resembles his father in both looks and manners and fully shares his political viewpoint. A shrewd and reasonably mature politician, given his age, who has clearly set out goals and purpose. In a local newspaper interview some time ago, he admitted to higher political ambitions, above Council politics. Sees the way forward only through dialogue, and has gone on the record that he would be prepared to sit down with Sinn Fein after they are admitted fully into the democratic process. During the IRA ceasefire, he shared a platform with Mitchel McLaughlin, SF National Chairman, at a fringe meeting of the Liberal Democrats Conference in Glasgow (late 1995).

JUNE 1996