

**From:** Pat McFadden  
**Date:** 27 March 1998

**John Holmes**

**cc:** Jonathan Powell  
Angus Lapsley

**Meeting with Quentin Oliver on Northern Ireland referendum**

Quentin Oliver is co-ordinating a mix of voluntary organisations and business people to run a 'Yes' campaign whenever the referendum comes. He is just leaving a job with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. He studied in Glasgow and at the time was a member of the Labour Club. He has some good ideas and seems pretty sensible, though perhaps a bit ambitious about what such a campaign might be able to achieve.

He says he has the CBI and a number of the voluntary organisations lined up but is having trouble with the unions. This is a problem as they provided funding for the cross party campaign, at least in Scotland. He wants Mo to speak to the UK general secretaries, particularly of the GMB, TGWU and Unison to try to get their Northern Ireland organisations to help more. The TGWU and Unison have traditionally taken a very strong line on all matters Northern Ireland from their regional people and may be reluctant to lean on them too heavily.

He is in touch with Trevor Smith of Rowntree. They funded the cross party groups in the other referendum campaigns and I think Trevor is likely to be sympathetic.

He said Mo and Tony would be valuable campaigners but other than that thought Labour Ministers should stay out of it. He was unenthusiastic for example about Donald or Ron campaigning for a yes vote.



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He is meeting today with a number of people in Millbank who have experience of the other campaigns. They will have ideas for press stories and visits.

He thought the civil service should do no more than they did in Scotland and Wales – remind people to vote and arrange a summary of the proposals to be delivered to every household.

A group like his could be useful in producing celebrity endorsements and getting “soft” community based yes stories in the press. Our party people should probably keep in touch with him.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Pat', followed by a small dot.