

2 April 1995,

Professor Trevor Smith,
Knocktarna,
195 Mountsandel Road,
COLERAINE,
Co Londonderry BT52 1TA.

Dear Trevor,

I have since thought a good deal about our conversation during that delightful Dinner Party at your home.

You are of course absolutely right. There is a very real need for a Press Officer who could get the message across during the next crucial period.

I have discussed the issue with senior colleagues, though without acknowledging its genesis. All are totally agreed on the opportunities such an appointment would offer the party. The key significance at a time - post-Framework and post-ceasefires - when both unionism and nationalism are in their different ways undergoing internal realignment and uncertainty makes this an opportunity for growth for Alliance.

Amongst our most capable young people I have found one who is, I believe, ideal. I enclose his C.V.

He is a committed party member and helped as a volunteer during the Euro-election. A very accomplished Gaelic sportsman, a Cambridge graduate (I first met him when he asked me to give him an interview for his dissertation on Europe and Northern Ireland), and fresh from experience with a media company, he is currently working part-time on a PhD. His scholarship gives him the freedom to work half-time, and he is currently using this to free-lance with Michael Macmillan's (formerly of BBC) company. I have talked to him about the possibility, if I could access funds, of him undertaking a two-year part-time position as press officer. I have talked in terms of £7,000/7,500 per year for this, and he is enthusiastic about the possibility. Our experience with him to date has been completely positive.

I would therefore wish to make an application to Rowntree for funds of £8,000 per year for two years for a part-time Press Officer to work from Party Headquarters with a brief to increase the party profile, and enable us to get the message across in the lead up to both Westminster and possible Assembly

elections.

For your interest can I also report that from 1 January 1995 we were able to appoint a Constituency Assistant to work with me in East Belfast. His name is Richard Good. (His father, a Methodist minister, was for a time the leader of the Corrymeela site in Ballycastle.) We have had him with the Lib Dems for some training, and he is working very enthusiastically. He has pulled the office in East Belfast together, put out Focus leaflets to two areas, and given some bite to a number of local campaigning initiatives in the constituency, as well as helping me with the general constituency work. His appointment has been a great success, and I am very grateful to you for making it possible through the financial help of the Rowntree Reform Trust.

I may also say on an other note that I am taking Joan and the children away for a three-week holiday to California in July/August. That too is attributable to your consideration, and we are all looking forward to the time together, far away from press statements, meetings and constituency calls!

Kindest Regards to Julia and yourself,

Dr John T Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

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