

► The FSB continued...

The success of the conference meant it acted as a showcase for both the Northern Ireland region of the FSB, Belfast city and Northern Ireland as a whole.

Each branch also held a number of events in 2007, in the South East, a series of information seminars on inheritance and other taxes, in the Western, drinks receptions in the Lord Mayor's Parlour by the Belfast City Branch and, a Women in Business workshop by the North East.

Regional activities also included raising money for the FSB's chosen charity, which in 2006 was Action Cancer and for 2007/08, is Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Another major area of the FSB's work is as a campaigning pressure group. The FSB devises its own policies based on the needs of their members and uses those to lobby parliament.

FSB Policy is formulated following consultation with their members, about what they need to make their businesses flourish and contribute to a strong economy. Every two years the FSB carries out a survey of members on a range of subjects to gauge their views. The results are published in the Barriers to Growth document, which is used as the main point for drawing up policy. The next survey will be conducted this year (2008).

In March 2007 the FSB in Northern Ireland launched its own manifesto ahead of the Assembly elections that contained all their own policies. Called Thinking Big for Small Businesses, it was distributed widely to all the election candidates, press and media.

### Young Entrepreneurs

The FSB is also involved in encouraging young entrepreneurial talent and each year an awards ceremony is held with the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges to recognize the achievements of the best business students in each of the Colleges of Further Education.

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