

Donald J. Trump

Trump International Golf Links Scotland

Main Precognition

Golf & Leisure Resort

Menie Estate, Balmedie, Aberdeenshire



Public Inquiry

Precognition of Donald J. Trump

1. My name is Donald J. Trump and I am a real estate developer and investor from New York City.
2. I very much enjoy playing golf, but even more so enjoy building great golf courses and developments. My course in Los Angeles, California is the #1 rated course in the State of California, my course in Palm Beach, Florida is the #1 rated course in the State of Florida, my course in Bedminster, New Jersey (the former John DeLorean estate) is considered one of the best new courses built in many years, and my course in Westchester County is rated one of the best courses in the entire New York/Connecticut area.
3. Recently, Trump International Golf Club in Puerto Rico hosted a PGA Tour event and drew 78,000 people --- a great success and approximately double what the PGA Tour had expected. I am also involved in magnificent courses in the Canouan Islands (West Indies) and the Dominican Republic (which is under construction). Despite the tremendous accolades given to the above-mentioned courses, I believe that if I am allowed to build in Scotland, it will be the greatest golf course anywhere in the world!
4. While my primary business is in the development of buildings in NYC and elsewhere, I greatly enjoy the artistry of creating championship golf courses.
5. Over the last number of years I have investigated over 200 sites throughout Europe in that it has always been an ambition of mine to create a great golf course somewhere outside the United States and preferably, because of my heritage, in Scotland. Of the 200 sites many were magnificent but there is nothing anywhere in the world that could match what we have the opportunity to do in Aberdeenshire.
6. Scotland is recognised throughout the world as the home of golf. The game was invented in Scotland. It hosts some of the finest links courses including the highly prestigious Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews which governs the amateur game worldwide.
7. There is one type of course that is almost unique to Scotland and that symbolises Scotland and golf - the links courses, for example, St. Andrews, Carnoustie, Turnberry, Royal Troon and Muirfield. Of course there are other well

known courses outside Scotland but none of them I believe have that special, magical quality that one recognises as uniquely Scottish.

8. I know that if I am to build the best golf course in the world it has to be in Scotland, and it must be a Scottish course – not an American, European or Asian interpretation of a Scottish course. It has to look and feel Scottish and be sympathetic to the setting and landscape.

9. And it has to be extraordinary. Creating a golf course from scratch to compete with courses which have already established themselves among the greatest in the world is difficult. The only way to do it is to choose a site with superb topography and hire one of the best links architects to design it.

10. I instinctively knew this was the right property in the right location to realize this vision. It has great vistas and majestic dunes with views out to sea and over Aberdeenshire and beyond.

11. In March 2006 I came to Scotland and walked the site. I immediately knew that my instinct had been correct and we had found the perfect place in which to realize that vision. The land was unbelievably beautiful. I visited with the R and A in St. Andrews and asked them what I needed to create a golf course that would attract a major championship. They strongly recommended Dr. Martin Hawtree.

12. He is a highly-respected golf architect but his speciality is links courses. His reputation in this area is second to none. At first he worked with Tom Fazio II who has worked on a number of my golf developments but eventually I recognised that Dr. Hawtree should be given the sole design assignment.

13. The design has been through many different iterations – in each case to improve the quality of the course as well as take account of the sensitive nature of the site. It will continue to evolve but I do believe that we are now close to perfection.

14. I have seen Dr. Hawtree's latest design. I have walked the site with him and talked with him about the concept. What he has created is magnificent and more than lives up to my expectations and hopes for the site. The course appears to grow out of the land. It uses and totally respects the topography. It creates challenging holes in a wonderful and beautiful setting.

15. I have shown the site to many of my golfing friends and professionals and they all agree that this will be an unbelievable course.

16. From the outset, I have been concerned about the environmental effects of the development. I hired the best environmental consultants and they have provided a very detailed, frank and honest assessment of the site. I have taken their advice and have accommodated their concerns within the development. When completed, this land will be environmentally enhanced and better than it was before.

16. I appreciate the fact that the northern part of the championship course will be developed within the southern end of a Site of Special Scientific Interest. I know that the designation has been made because of the geomorphology of the dunes. The stabilisation of part of the dune system will have environmental benefits and in the end, many people will welcome it.

17. Some people have asked why we do not simply move the championship course off the southern end of the SSSI and build the course elsewhere. They have accused me of unwillingness to compromise.

18. I greatly respect their views, however, if we do that we could no longer build a truly great course --- a good course, yes – a great course, no!

19. The bottom line is that if we were to be refused permission to develop on the southern end of the SSSI, I would withdraw from this development because it would not, and could not, fulfill my vision of doing something outstanding. I have always believed that if you cannot do it well, you should not do it at all. I am at a point in my career that if it is not going to be the best, I would not want to build it.

20. I am, however, fully committed to mitigating the effects of the course on the environment. The design must respect the topography of the site – indeed that is part of its attraction. Dr. Hawtree's design minimizes the amount of earthmoving and it causes even less disturbance than our prior plan that accompanied the earlier application.

21. I understand that further refinements can be made to the layout in order to ensure that the effect on habitats and species is minimized. I fully endorse that type of environmentally sensitive work. I also believe that there is the opportunity to create additional habitats which will produce environmental benefits.

22. Also, the stabilisation will be done sensitively using marram and other indigenous grasses. Again, I want to create a course that plays within the shadows of the dunes. Therefore preserving the sanctity and beauty of the dunes is of great importance to me.

23. We will ensure that construction is carried out in an environmentally sensitive manner. We will ensure that construction work is properly supervised and sensitively executed. In doing so, we will work with SNH, the Council and others to ensure access and will rely upon the best possible advice.

24. Finally, and importantly, I have given instructions that we should set up, at the earliest opportunity, a body to be known as Menie (Links) Environmental Management Advisory Group (MEMAG). Its role will be to advise our team on the construction and operation of the golf courses and related facilities. MEMAG will also give advice on how to minimize adverse changes and facilitate good management practices.

25. Dr. Ritchie will speak in greater detail on the proposal but I want to publicly give my full commitment to the establishment of MEMAG. We will work with the MEMAG group to ensure that any environmental effects are minimized and to fully achieve the environmental benefits of the development.

26. If we are to attract visitors the reputation of the development is fundamental to its success. In my experience, I have found that people will not play on a course that is environmentally harmful.

27. A world class golf course also requires world class facilities. I will shortly announce the appointment of a firm of Scottish architects to design the clubhouse, hotel and conference centre. I will not say too much about them because they will be the subject of separate consideration by the Council.

28. However, I recognise that if we are to maximize the economic benefit to the region, our facilities must match the quality of the course. The clubhouse is the nucleus of the development. It will be spectacular and like the course itself will respect the dune system and the natural environment. The hotel will be a grand five star building that will complement the landscape in the same way that the hotels at Turnberry and Gleneagles do.

29. The hotel and conference centre will attract golfers and non golfers. I believe that it will in itself be a major boost to the economy of the Northeast of Scotland.

30. We have also applied for permission to build 500 houses. The primary reason for doing so is to help fund the development. Golf courses, alone, do not make a fair return on investment. Ian Webster will address this issue in more detail but without the funding from the construction of homes the economics are far below an acceptable return on investment.

31. Besides, there is currently a shortage of good quality housing in the area. I believe that our development will address this shortage by building homes for families in a wonderful setting.

32. I have no doubt that the development will be a major boost for the economy of this part of Scotland. Indeed such will be the quality and reputation of the course and the associated resort that it will benefit Scotland as a whole. Stewart Dunlop from the Fraser of Allander Institute will address that issue further. You do not need to be an economist to realize that a development of this size and prestige brings in its wake major economic benefits. The widespread support of the business community is testimony to that fact and our development is already being spoken of favourably all over the world.

33. This has not been an easy development for me to pursue. I have found the process frustrating and candidly there have been times where I have wondered whether the investment in time, human resources and capital has been worth it. I have considered withdrawing from this project altogether and sadly, should this application be rejected, that may have to happen.

34. What has kept me going, however, is the support that I have received from the local community and even across all of Scotland. We have had thousands of letters, phone calls, emails and visits from a great many people who have urged us to keep pursuing this dream, both for myself and for Scotland as a whole. I was especially heartened to read of Aberdeenshire Council's overwhelming vote in favour of the development at their recent meeting.

35. Each time I come here and visit the site I appreciate once again that this is a truly spectacular location for the world's best golf course. I realize too how popular this is with those multitudes of supporters.

36. Sir, I respectfully ask that you and your fellow Reporters recommend to the Scottish Ministers that this application be granted.

