

**END OF HIS DREAM:** Trump at the site where his golf centre would have been, and, below right, protestors against the project, George Sorial and a plan of how hotel would look

# Trump is left empty-handed

Planners reject tycoon's £1bn golf resort by a single vote



AMERICAN billionaire Donald Trump yesterday threatened to abandon his dream of building a world class golf centre in the north-east after his plans were thrown out.

The £1billion project would have included a five-star hotel and 1,500 luxury homes, but Aberdeenshire Council's infrastructure committee last night refused planning permission.

Trump, whose mother is Scottish, can appeal to the Scottish Government and have his plans go to a public inquiry.

However, his spokesman George Sorial suggested the tycoon was planning to walk away.

He said: "Obviously we are very

By **Pamela Owen**

disappointed. We now have other options elsewhere in the UK.

"The housing and the golf course is non-negotiable for us, but we did compromise on other issues."

Trump had boasted of wanting to create the "best golf course in the world".

However, the scheme met widespread opposition because it would have been located on sensitive sand dunes in Balmedie.

Last week, councillors on the Formartine area committee backed the plans for the Menie Estate, which included two championship golf courses as well as a clubhouse, hotel, holiday villas and homes for staff.

The decision infuriated many locals in the secluded area, who

were appalled when Trump's interest in the area was first declared.

They launched a campaign group, Sustainable Aberdeenshire, to stop him.

Wildlife groups, including Scottish Natural Heritage and the RSPB, also condemned the plans, fearing they would destroy wildlife in the area, a Site of Scientific Interest.

However, despite the Formartine committee's decision, the final say went to members of the more powerful Infrastructure Committee yesterday.

Councillor Alistair Ross led the opposition to Trump. He said: "There are a lot of quick profits to be made.

"Jobs are going to come into the area, but the money is not going to stay here. Trump doesn't need the

houses. He wants the houses. I think we could get a much better deal."

After four hours of debate the vote ended in a tie, with chairman Martin Ford having the deciding vote. He voted to refuse the application.

Following months of work, Trump has been forced to go back to the drawing board and is now considering his next step.

Mr Sorial added: "Councillors have let down the people of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

"This decision sends a message that, if you want to do business, don't come to the north-east of Scotland."

But farmer Michael Forbes, who became an international hero after he stood up to Trump and refused to let him buy his land – which lies in the middle of the projected golf

centre – was delighted with the decision to throw out the plans.

The father-of-one celebrated last night, despite suffering from the flu.

He said: "I'm over the moon. Hopefully Trump has now got the message that we're not a bunch of cabbages up here.

"We've managed fine without him up to now and we'll get on just as well without him.

"Let Mr Sorial know that if he's stuck I'll give him a job cleaning my toilets."

Balmedie resident Mickey Foote, one of the leaders of Sustainable Aberdeenshire, was also delighted with the ruling.

He said: "We are very, very happy with the way things have turned out.

"We are positive that the right decision was made."

## Monty pledges £5m in memory of his mother



STAR Scots golfer Colin Montgomerie yesterday vowed to raise £5million to build a Glasgow-based centre for lung cancer patients in memory of his mum who was just 53 when she died.

The Elizabeth Montgomerie Centre, a joint venture with The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, could be open within the next two years.

Monty, who launched the appeal at Glasgow City Chambers yesterday, said: "My mother was born just before the Second World War and it is a sad fact

By **Brian Swanson**

that by the time she was a young woman in the mid-Fifties smoking was almost compulsory for anyone who wanted to be seen as elegant and sophisticated.

"I often wonder whether she might have survived if she had been able to have regular check-ups and had her tumour been spotted much earlier.

"That's why it feels right that I am putting a substantial amount of my own money into the pot to

give the new clinic the start it needs.

"I will also devote all the time I can spare to raising the further £5million required to make the dream a reality."

No site for the new centre has yet been chosen.

Professor Ray Donnelly, founder of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation said: "Colin's profile will be a significant contribution in helping lung cancer patients throughout the UK."

●Further information [www.roycastle.org](http://www.roycastle.org)



TRIBUTE: Colin Montgomerie with Professor Donnelly in Glasgow yesterday