

Scottish golf course will tee off on time with US cash injection

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An American resort developer has stepped in to ensure that the West Coast of Scotland's first new links golf course in more than a century opens this summer.

Southworth Development, based in Massachusetts, announced yesterday that it had bought a controlling interest in the Machrihanish Dunes development and would be injecting "several million pounds" to complete the estimated £30 million project.

After taking a minority stake in 2006, the US developer has acquired control of Kintyre Development Company (KDC), which in addition to the golf course owns the Ugadale Hotel and golf cottages in Machrihanish, and the Royal Hotel at Campbeltown.

The move by Southworth follows delays to the landmark development amid persistent rumours over KDC's ability to fund the mounting cost of the project. Brian Keating, the founder of KDC, will remain a shareholder and a director.

Like Donald Trump's more grandiose £500 million golf development on the opposite coast of Scotland, Machrihanish Dunes has been the subject of controversy because of its potential impact on the environment. Much of the 259-acre site is designated as being of special scientific interest, and securing planning consent has involved numerous hurdles.

The championship links, which is being built next door to the famous Machrihanish Golf Club designed by Old Tom Morris, has been created by David McLay Kidd, a Scots designer whose previous work includes the Castle course in St Andrews and Bandon Dunes in Oregon. Six of its greens border the Atlantic.

The cash injection from Southworth will enable the new course to open in May with an official launch on July 21, two days after the Open Championship reaches its climax at Turnberry, another famous links on Scotland's West Coast.

Southworth is one of the biggest golf resort developers in the world, with courses in the United States, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. They include Creighton Farms, a Jack Nicklaus-designed course outside Washington DC, while in the Bahamas the company is developing the PGA Village, a 1,900-acre site featuring 1,500 apartments and villas, a five-star hotel, a casino and two golf courses.