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Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club Named IAGTO Sustainability Award Winner Scottish Course Recognized for Outstanding Commitment to Sustainable Golf

(ARGYLL, Scotland) – It was announced today that Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club in Machrihanish, Scotland has been named the recipient of the Outstanding Commitment to Sustainable Golf Award by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO), in partnership with GEO (Golf Environmental Organization). This IAGTO Sustainability Award was given to Machrihanish Dunes in recognition of its “outstanding and inspiring work as a minimal-impact golf course, in harmony with its natural environment.”

In announcing this discretionary award, GEO noted that it was given in recognition of Machrihanish Dunes’ “exemplary and ongoing commitment to sustainability, and highlights the exceptional contributions or actions which have been brought to GEO’s attention through certification, media coverage and other award entries.”

Machrihanish Dunes was the first 18-hole golf course in the United Kingdom to earn GEO certification, an honor that it achieved in 2010. The 18-hole links golf course located on the west coast of Scotland was designed by David McLay Kidd and is sited on an environmentally protected Site of Special Scientific Interest. Of the 259 acres upon which the course sits, only seven were modified during the creation of the course—just greens and tees—with no heavy equipment or inorganic materials used. Throughout the course-creation process and in all the years since, Machrihanish Dunes has worked hand-in-glove with Scottish Natural Heritage to ensure that the site’s fragile ecosystem (and in particular its protected species of rare orchids and moths) is managed and nurtured in the most sustainable way possible.

Among its many other on- and off-course efforts, the club’s rough-management program to protect the orchids, manual removal of invasive weeds, careful management of ragwort to safeguard the health of moths, and commitment to increasing the percentages of perennial grasses in fine turf areas are just a few examples of the programs that Machrihanish Dunes follows to safeguard its coastal environment—as is the distribution of nesting boxes around the course for the benefit of the visiting wheateater population. In addition, Machrihanish Dunes has demonstrated a strong and ongoing commitment to community. The club focuses at all times on the use of local suppliers and is a key contributor to area environmental and charitable efforts. It believes in holistic sustainability that touches upon every aspect of its place in the Kintyre community, and through its charitable arm, The Kintyre Club, has had a positive impact on dozens of worthy causes and thousands of area residents’ lives.

“Machrihanish Dunes have, from the course’s inception through to today, worked in harmony with the natural environment,” explained Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive of GEO. “In many ways the Machrihanish Dunes project represents golf’s turning point back towards stunning, highly naturalised courses. Their commitment and actions to use natural resources efficiently and provide positive community value also factored into our desire award them this significant recognition.”

IAGTO Chief Executive Peter Walton commented: “Machrihanish Dunes have been an IAGTO member for 10 years, were the UK’s first GEO-certified course and have been nominated every year since our inaugural Sustainability Awards back in 2012. It is courses like Machrihanish Dunes and their management that are driving sustainability forward in new and innovative ways and they are enormously deserving of the special accolade bestowed upon them this year.”

“We are thrilled to have received this special award from GEO and IAGTO,” said David Southworth, Founder and CEO of Southworth Development, the parent company of The Village at Machrihanish Dunes. “Our company places great importance on being good stewards of the environment, and Machrihanish Dunes has shown that it’s possible to provide an even more elevated experience to visitors by putting ecological responsibilities at the forefront. We consider ourselves privileged to have the opportunity to stand watch over this precious shore land, and to make it possible for so many people to come to Machrihanish and enjoy it. It’s a responsibility that we welcome—and one that we also take very seriously.”

Each year, IAGTO, in partnership with GEO, celebrates the outstanding sustainability efforts and accomplishments of golf facilities, resorts and destinations around the world. Currently in its fifth year, the IAGTO Sustainability Awards are presented at the International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) annual gala dinner. In addition to the Outstanding Commitment to Sustainable Golf Award given to Machrihanish Dunes, awards are also given to a Sustainable Destination of the year and individual facilities in three key areas: Nature, Resources, and Community. The 2017 IGTM gala dinner was held at Son Amar in Palma, Mallorca, Spain. For more information about the 2017 IAGTO Sustainability Awards, visit: <http://www.iagto.com/awards>.