



COSTA DEL SOL NEWS

LORD KILMARNOCK IN RONDA GOLF ROW

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By David Eade

Reports have emerged in the British press regarding the involvement of Lord Kilmarnock, stepfather of novelist Martin Amis, in the conflict surrounding a planned golf development in Ronda, where Kilmarnock lives with the British author's mother, Hilary Bardwell. The couple and others are reportedly being sued for £15 million over the tactics they have used to oppose the Los Merinos golf and residential project. The plans for the development consist of two golf courses, three hotels and 800 homes on the edge of the Sierra de las Nieves national park.

While the project has the backing of Ronda town hall, it has met staunch opposition from local residents, ecologist groups and Cuevas del Becerro town hall, which fear its impact on the surrounding countryside and local aquifers. The regional government and the Andalucía water authority have also voiced concerns over the development.

Now, say Lord Kilmarnock and the others named in the suit – fellow Briton David Milnes and German Petra Wiegink – the developers claim that some investors have pulled out because of an opposition campaign involving “slander, coercion, intimidation and threats.” The case is due to be heard in the courts this month. Lord Kilmarnock and his co-defendants have the backing of Spain's Los Verdes party, which claims the opponents to the golf project were subject to “Mafia-style harassment stemming from the alliance between politicians and developers.” An earlier lawsuit claiming that protesters falsified signatures on a petition against the golf project was thrown out by the Ronda court just after Christmas and environmental activists are planning to counter-sue.