

Group up in arms over Culloden

Plans: More protests to be held over houses bid

BY JANE CANDLISH

Further demonstrations are planned against proposals for new houses within sight of a historic Highland battlefield.

Almost 100 people joined a rally at Culloden on Saturday to protest at plans to build 16 houses next to the landmark site.

Wearing kilts and waving flags, the protesters, who came from throughout Scotland, marched on the battlefield to mark their opposition to the building plans.

Inverness Properties's plans for homes at Viewhill Farm at Culloden outside Inverness were originally

turned down by Highland councillors last year. But the firm won its appeal to the Scottish Government last month.

Protesters claim the move sets a dangerous

"This development must be stopped. It's sacrilege"

precedent which could lead to more development on the site, where the Jacobite rebellion was crushed in 1746.

An online petition has



SHOW OF STRENGTH: George Kempik carries a wreath as protesters gather at Culloden Battlefield. Photograph: Gordon Lennox

gathered more than 11,000 names so far, with people across the globe adding their signatures.

At the battlefield on Saturday, organiser Carolyn Seggie said: "The bloodshed did not stop where the fencing around the battlefield stops. Culloden is a war grave and a historic site that draws Scots descendants from all over the world who come to honour their history and the sacred memories of the men who died there".

Protester John Taylor, a taxi driver from Douglas, Dundee, travelled north to voice his opposition.

He said: "Culloden Battlefield is an iconic heritage

site and our ancestors are laid to rest here. This development must be stopped. It's sacrilege".

After laying a wreath at the battlefield memorial, campaigners also staged a similar demo in the city centre, handing out leaflets about the plans.

One of the group leaders, Davy Tolmie, said that people were surprised to hear about the housing plans.

He said that a further protest was planned in April, following a service to mark the anniversary of the battle.

It is 268 years since the Battle of Culloden, when an estimated 1,500 Jacobite rebels were killed.

Ferry arrives for major repairs

SHIPPING

A Highlands and islands ferry has arrived in the north of England for major repairs to her rudder.

Serious steering problems hit Caledonian Macbrayne's biggest ship within hours of leaving her annual overhaul 10 days ago.

The MV Isle of Lewis is deemed unsafe to carry passengers and has been taken out of service until further notice.

The rudder fault arose during her first commercial sailing on the Stornoway to Ullapool route following a three-week absence.

Inspections and repairs to her rudder require her to be taken out of the water and the only dry dock available at short notice is Liverpool. But the ship was

stuck in Ullapool for over a week due to fears that her steering could suddenly go off course in busy sea lanes.

It is understood engineers carried out temporary work on her rudder while berthed at the Wester Ross port in recent days.

On Friday, a crane was seen working at her aft end after the ferry was ballasted down by the bow which lifted up her stern up and allowed a degree of access to the top of her rudder.

Hours later she departed for Liverpool for a more detailed assessment of the fault.

Previously, a CalMac spokesman said: "The cause of the rudder issue is not known, and more detailed investigations will be carried out when she is in dry dock. It is too early to say when repairs will be

completed and she can return to the route, but we will do everything we can to minimise her time out of

service." The only ship available to cover the busy route is the much smaller MV Isle of Arran.

Words by the Wayside



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(1st Timothy 2:5,6)

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