

KilliecrAnkie1689

12 January 2018

The battle of Killiecrankie A9 is spreading to Holyrood. Murdo Fraser, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife has lodged a motion in parliament. The hope is that there will be a members debate on the subject at a later date.

KilliecrAnkie1689, the group that is challenging the way Transport Scotland plans to widen the A9 road through the battle site, is delighted. "We are trying to heighten public awareness of the adverse impact that Transport Scotland's preferred route will have in Killiecrankie. A debate in Holyrood should help," says a spokesman.

The troops who are rallying under the KilliecrAnkie1689 banner are actually in favour of upgrading the A9 because of safety concerns. But they do not accept that the proposed plan is the best way to do it. "There must be a way to make the road safer and respect the relatively small area where most of the 2,000 slain actually fell," they say.

The Battle of Killiecrankie took place on 27 July 1689 when John Graham of Claverhouse, known to his followers as Bonnie Dundee, led a Jacobite force to a surprising victory. It was the first flashpoint of the Jacobite uprisings and more men died at Killiecrankie than at the Battle of Culloden which brought the Jacobite rebellion to a decisive end.

KilliecrAnkie1689 will be yelling their battle cry from now until the period for objection to Transport Scotland's A9 plans closes on 23 January 2018. So to help you understand what the noise is about, here is a handy guide.

Q Who is KilliecrAnkie1689?

A It comprises some residents of Killiecrankie who are worried about how the proposed route for the A9 dualling will be built on the battle site.

Q When was KilliecrAnkie1689 formed?

A Very recently, after the Environmental Statement and draft Road Orders were published. In other words after the final plan for the A9 was published.

Q What does KilliecrAnkie1689 want?

A It wants to gather as much support as it can from everyone interested in Scottish history and heritage so that so that the new A9 road is well planned in a sensitive way .

Q Why is KilliecrAnkie1689 making such a noise now? This plan has been years in the making.

A Until now, ordinary householders and individuals have practically no say in decisions. The only time ordinary individuals have an opportunity to express an opinion is during an 8-week period that started when the final plan was published at the end of November.

Q When will the 8-week period run out?

A On 23 January 2018. After that date, Transport Scotland does not need to heed any comment from a member of the community.

Q Is KilliecrAnkie1689 against the A9 dualling programme?

A No. KilliecrAnkie1689 is in favour of upgrading the road. But it wants one that suits the community and is more sensitive to the battlefield.

Q Surely the battle site is already ruined by the road going through it? What can you achieve now?

A The original road was built in the 1970s without much thought towards history or heritage. Attitudes have changed significantly since then and so has policy on our historical environment. Killiecrankie1689 wants Transport Scotland to comply with all requirements to make sure that our cultural heritage is conserved and enhanced.

Q Is this just a way of getting the route shifted?

A Killiecrankie1689 comprises lay people who are not qualified to plan an alternative route. But there must be another way of dualling the road AND respecting the battle site.

Q What is the main problem with the design that is proposed?

A This route requires all the widening to be done on the northbound carriageway. That means building a wider road on a slope. Thousands of tonnes of material will have to be dumped along the northbound carriageway to build the new carriageway up to the level of the existing road. This will ruin key features of the battlefield.

Q Why does that matter? The road is there already.

A The area that will be bought to widen the road and create new lay-bys comprises the key area where men died. The battle site is quite large. The boundary extends way up the hill and down into the Pass. The actual area of hand-to-hand combat – the blood field – is quite small. This is the area where the new road is to go.

Q Why is the Battle of Killiecrankie significant?

A The name has entered popular imagination because it was the first engagement of the period of the Jacobite rebellion. The Jacobite leader was John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, known as Bonnie Dundee to his followers. He was killed leading his men and though the battle counted as a Jacobite win, this particular uprising failed probably because Dundee was killed.

Q Why should this battlefield get special treatment?

A This is the only battle site on the A9. It was a horrific episode in Scottish history. The fighting lasted less than an hour in which time 2,000 men (some say more) were slain. This would not be special treatment – just what should be done in respect of the dead.

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Information on the A9 project Killiecrankie to Glen Garry, including the Environmental Statement and draft Road Orders, is available on Transport Scotland's website: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-killiecrankie-to-glen-garry/>

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