Bright future for pub built for First World War heroes

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Training base and home of boxer Henry Cooper ahead of 1963 fight with Muhammad Ali to be revived as a community venue.

The Bellingham Estate in South London was built in the 1920s as part of the Government's drive to provide 'homes fit for heroes' for returning First World War soldiers and their families. It was a grand vision that was replicated across the UK and in many ways was the forerunner to what later became council housing estates.

At the centre of the Bellingham Estate is The Fellowship Inn. Once the beating heart of this community, it acted as a training base and home for the local lad, heavyweight boxer Henry Cooper ahead of his 1963 fight with Cassius Clay, later Muhammad Ali. Sadly, the building went into decline in the 70s and 80s while still used by many locals today, it is semi derelict.

Now, the future of this iconic South London pub is looking much brighter. With the help of Lottery money, social landlord Phoenix Community Housing is set to return it to a thriving community venue that will generate more than 70 jobs and apprenticeships along with more than 200 volunteering and training opportunities.

The new-look Fellowship Inn will become a central hub of the community and will provide Lewisham Borough's only cinema, a live music venue, café, microbrewery, artisan bakery and space for artists' studios.

[quote=Jim Ripley, Phoenix Community Housing]"A venue that will create new opportunities for hundreds of our residents and really put Bellingham back on the map."[/quote]

Chief Executive of Phoenix Community Housing, Jim Ripley, said: "Over the past few decades pub after pub in our area has closed its doors. That reflects the general trend in our area over many years – lack of investment, lower than average educational attainment and high unemployment.

"We look forward to building on the heritage of a fantastic building and creating a venue that will create new opportunities for hundreds of our residents and really put Bellingham back on the map."

Efallai y bydd gennych chi ddiddordeb hefyd mewn ...

New ideas need old buildings