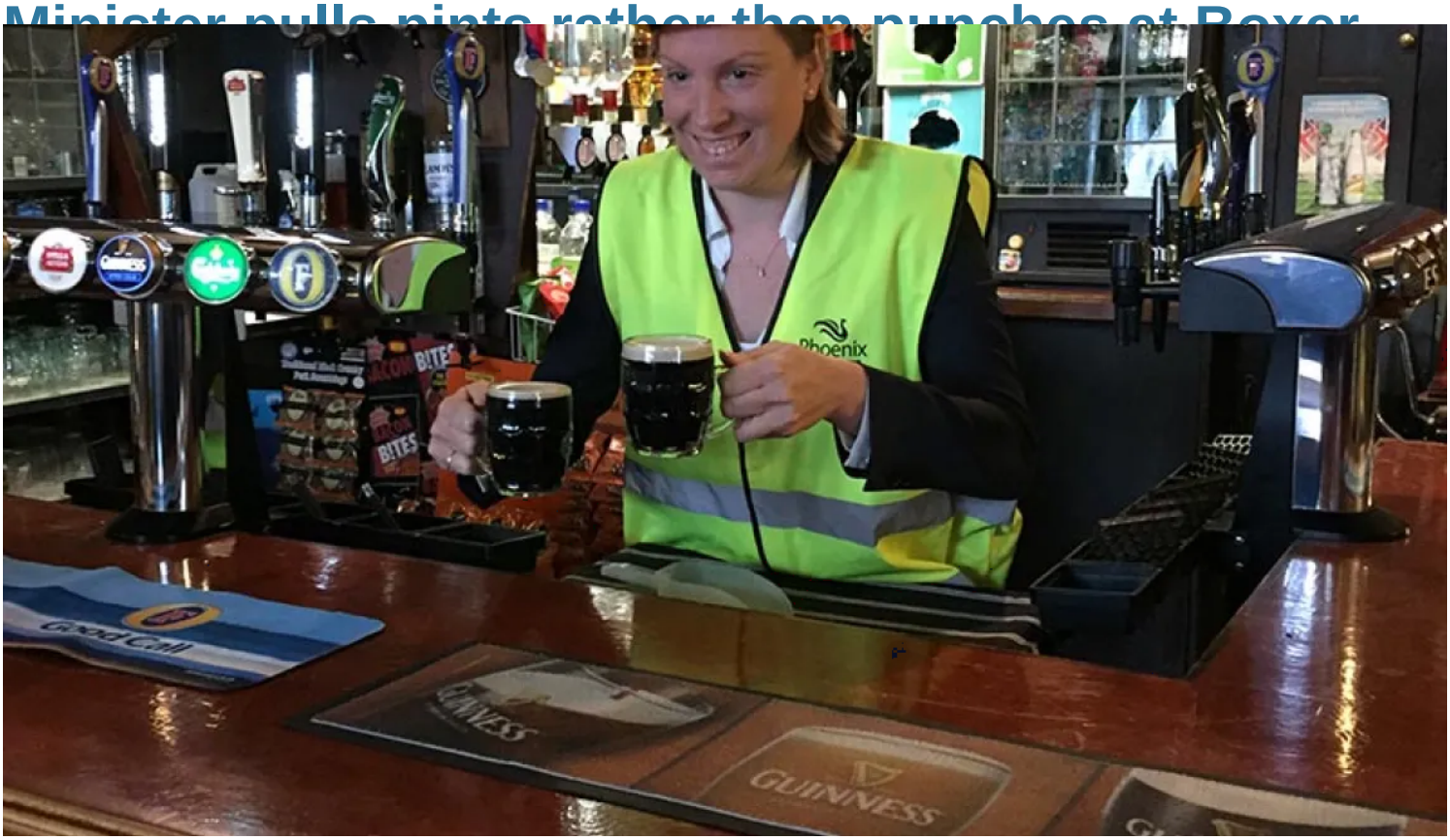
Minister pulls pints rather than punches at Boxer



Heritage Minister Tracey Crouch pulling pints at The Fellowship Inn, Bellingham, South London

On a visit to the Fellowship Inn in Bellingham, Minister for Sport, Heritage and Tourism Tracey Crouch has announced a £4million National Lottery investment to revive the beleaguered pub.

The pub once sat at the heart of a thriving new community built for returning First World War heroes and their families. But since the 1980s it has been in decline and today stands semi-derelict in one of the UK's most deprived areas, where 40 per cent of children live in poverty.

With its tatty exterior, peeling paint, abandoned 200 seater dance and music hall and crumbling function room - complete with defunct neon discothèque sign - it's hard to believe that in the 1970s this vast building played host to live acts like Fleetwood Mac and Eric Clapton. In 1963, heavyweight boxer Henry Cooper lived and trained at the pub in the lead up to his first fight with Muhammad Ali at Wembley Stadium.

Pub on the up

But things are on the up for The Fellowship Inn and Bellingham more widely. On a visit to the pub, the Minister for Sport, Heritage and Tourism Tracey Crouch announced a £4million National Lottery investment that will enable Phoenix Community Housing to revive this beleaguered building into a thriving and commercially sustainable business that will

help regenerate the whole area.

The newly developed pub will include a:

- cinema
- new live music venue - at a time when many of London's venues are closing
- café
- microbrewery – with beer using locally grown hops
- bakery
- artists' studios

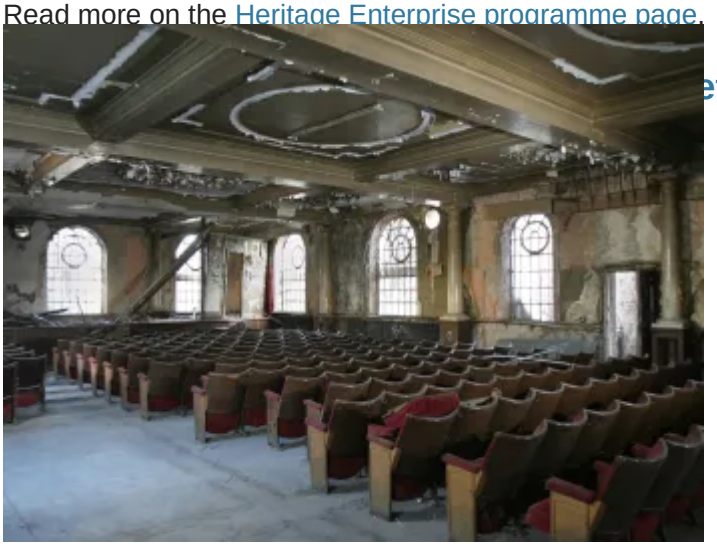
The project will create 70 new jobs and 45 apprenticeships over the next 15 years. And arguably most importantly, the main bar area of the pub will be fully restored and remain open – fantastic news at a time when many of the UK's historic pubs are closing.

> "It is fantastic that this once vibrant pub will be restored to its former glory thanks to the generosity of National Lottery players."
>
> *Tracey Crouch, Heritage Minister*

Heritage Enterprise

The renaissance of the Fellowship has been made possible with money from HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme. It is designed to help where the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that redevelopment is simply not commercially viable. Grants of £100,000 to £5million bridge the financial gap, funding the vital repairs and conservation work needed to convert derelict, vacant buildings like The Fellowship Inn, into new, usable commercial spaces that can have a positive impact on local economies.

Read more on the Heritage Enterprise programme page.



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Bright future for pub built for First World War heroes



Henry Cooper behind the bar of The Fellowship Inn, South London in 1963

Champion Boxer Henry Cooper’s South London training pub gets £4m National Lottery restoration