

# **Bid to reopen West Wales pub once frequented by poet Dylan Thomas as a community enterprise**

A bid to reopen a Ceredigion pub once frequented by poet Dylan Thomas and his wife Caitlin as a community-owned co-operative is closing in on its £330,000 fundraising target.

People living in Ystrad Aeron, near Felinfach, Ceredigion, are seeking to acquire and reopen the Vale of Aeron.

The pub was a favourite haunt of the poet and his wife Caitlin when they lived in nearby Talsarn in the early 1940s.

Residents from across the Aeron Valley formed a group, Menter Tafarn y Vale, to buy the building. To date more than £200,000 has been raised with backers including actor Matthew Rhys. Offers have come in from across the UK, including from as far afield as Cornwall, Manchester and London. The Now they are appealing to individuals, businesses and organisations for a final push to help them reach their total by December 12th.

Iwan Thomas, secretary of the group, said: "One by one all the local pubs have closed and until recently this was the only one left in this part of the Aeron Valley.

"It was well used by the community as a gathering place for social groups from all the neighbouring villages, such as the football club and the young farmers club. We don't want to reopen it as just a pub. We want it to become a community asset and an informal home for some of our local groups and societies."

The group is being supported and advised by the Wales Co-

operative Centre's Community Shares Wales Resilience Project.

Claudia Limpert, project manager of the Community Shares Wales Resilience Project said: "Taking ownership of The Vale of Aeron via a community share offer is a fantastic way to not only save this important landmark, but to put the control of the pub's future into the hands of the people that is means the most to."



A plaque to poet Dylan Thomas at the Vale of Aeron. Menter Tafarn y Vale said it will look to improve facilities at the pub, including access and toilets, as well as to reduce its carbon footprint by upgrading its insulation and installing a heat pump.

If the £330,000 target isn't reached by December 12th, the fundraising deadline could be extended.

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Shares cost £1 with a minimum shareholding of £200 and a maximum of £30,000. Regardless of the number of shares bought each member of the co-operative will have one vote.

The Vale of Aeron closed in September after a long-term lease came to an end.

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