

MORE HOUSES FOR MAYFORD

Iain Wakeford 2017



Late last year we looked at how new housing at the end of the 1950's and early 60's transformed every part of the Woking area, with former fields and woodland being built upon in West Woking; old houses being demolished and replaced in Byfleet (whilst new 'old' houses were to be built in Horsell); and the merging of Maybury, Pyrford and West Byfleet as new estates were developed by local building firms -many of which just a few years earlier, had been involved in the construction of Woking's early post-war council housing schemes.

One part of the district that remained relatively unscathed in this period, was the Sutton Green and Mayford areas, although even here some

limited development had started to take place near Worplesdon Station where the Mayford House Estate (Woodpecker Way) was begun in the late 1950's and Prey Heath Close was so named in May 1958.

The reason this area had remained largely ignored by developers was partially to do with the infrastructure – in particular the lack of mains drainage. The late 1950's had seen a number of new large sewers constructed in the area, through St John's to Knaphill and through Pyrford to Sheerwater, with other improvements to the sewage works at both Woking and Wisley. But at Sutton Green and on the outskirts of Mayford, many properties still relied on cess-pits, until that is a new sewer was

Until the early 1960's the village of Mayford had managed to remain separate from much of the urban sprawl of Woking.

constructed through the village in the early 1960's – much to the delight of some villagers who were happy to be connected to mains drainage at last.

What they hadn't bargained for (or perhaps chose to ignore) was that as soon as the new sewer was complete, there would be little to stop the developers from seeking (and gaining) permission to build. Planning applications had been turned down in Saunders Lane in 1953, 1956 and again in 1958 – partially on the basis of lack of adequate drainage.

Nowadays the name Rhoda McGaw is probably only associated with local amateur dramatics, but back in the 50's and 60's the councillor (after whom the smaller Peacock's theatre is named) was known not just for her support of the arts, but also for the 'drama' she brought to the council chamber. As one of Woking's first Communist Councillors she often espoused controversial ideas, none more so perhaps than in May 1957 when she proposed that the land north of Saunders Lane should be zoned at eight houses to the acre – sufficient she claimed for 350 council houses to be built.



But in the early 1960's the laying of a new mains sewer through the village led to call for development, and the large village green was under threat too with the proposed roundabout and by-pass to the winding Guildford Road.



By that stage she was a more moderate Labour supporter, but even so with a clear Conservative majority on the council it is not surprising that the motion was lost, although perhaps worryingly for the residents of Mayford it was only defeated by eight votes to six. One prominent member of the planning committee suggested that the idea of zoning the land for housing was merely 'premature at the present time' and it seems that in fact Cllr McGaw was just five years ahead of her time, as in the

Autumn of 1962 Woking Council's Tory controlled Housing Committee announced their interest in the land for possible council house development and asked the Engineer and Surveyor to 'submit a plan most suitable for this purpose'!

Of course nothing came of the idea (or numerous private schemes afterwards, such as that proposed in 1963 by Winchester Estates and E H Childs for 26 acres of land north of Saunders Lane), but that didn't stop other 'infilling' taking place between Saunders Lane and Smarts Heath Road – nor other schemes in and around the village centre.

Indeed even before the new sewer was complete there had been a few small scale

Even as early as the late 1950's councillors had their eye on the fields north of Saunders Lane for housing, although fortunately nothing has been built there (yet)!

developments. In April 1956 the council were busy debating whether a new cul-de-sac off Westfield Road should be named 'Westfield Close' or 'Mayford Close' (the latter finally being settled upon), but to a certain extent you could argue that whatever they called it didn't really matter – the truth was that by then Mayford and Westfield were inseparable with proposals for new estates on the fields of Honeypots and Ellis Farms meaning Mayford was now firmly linked via Westfield and Kingfield to the urban sprawl of Woking.

The 1965 revision of the 1958 Surrey Structure Plan still had the fields and nurseries around Mayford marked as undeveloped, but that didn't stop the council and private developers from proposing to build on the land.

