

Five-year revaluation
by Inland Revenue

Rates blow to sports clubs

SPORTS clubs and community groups could face increases of hundreds of pounds on their rates from April.

New valuations of all non-domestic premises are being drawn up for the first time in five years.

The move means cash-strapped organisations could face rateable value increases of 17% on average, according to the London-based Valuations Office, part of the Inland Revenue.

Shepley Cricket Club's rateable value is set to go up from £2,000 to £2,700, a rise of 35% — more than the Yorkshire and Humberside average.

Club secretary Mel Briggs said: "At the moment we pay almost £700 for rates including water. An increase will add to our financial burden. And for what?"

"This is dead money. We pay Kirklees but get nothing in return because we use no council services.

"It is a disincentive to all our volunteers who put in time and effort to run the club and could pose a real threat to the community services we provide in the village."

Kirklees Council can offer sports and community associations rate discounts of up to 100% on a discretionary basis.

By JENNY
PARKIN
and ROSEY
HAMILTON

that got better deals than those in Kirklees.

He said: "Clubs in Rastrick and Elland that play in the Huddersfield League are paying out far less than their counterparts in Kirklees.

"Also it seems clubs are being penalised for improving their facilities for the good of their communities. Better premises are worth more and so the rates go up."

Increases can be introduced gradually through a transitional relief scheme.

Businesses and community groups have the right to appeal to the Valuations Office before September 2000.

A spokesman for



Television Rugby League commentator Ray French was the guest speaker when Shepley Cricket Club held a sportsman's evening and fundraising dinner at Greenhead Masonic Hall. Mr French, an ex-player with St Helens and Great Britain is pictured (back left) with club secretary Melvyn Briggs and (front left) president Graham Leslie and comedian Micky Gunn.