

**SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**SPECIAL DELEGATION PROCEDURE**

Cllr

For your approval &  
return to DSU

For Information

Committee: **CITY AREA (Planning)**

FROM: Licensing Officer – T Oke      SERVICE UNIT: Environmental Services

DATE: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2004

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**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The film 'The Passion of Christ' deals with the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus as interpreted by its Director, Mel Gibson.
- 1.2 The British Board of Film Classifications have given it an 18 rating which means, in their view, it should not be seen by persons under 18 years of age.
- 1.3 The film is due to be shown at the Odeon, Salisbury on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2004 for an indefinite period of time.

**2. APPLICATION**

- 2.1 John Holme, a Pastor for the Heath Ministries, Salisbury has written to me in a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2004, attached as Annex A, giving reasons why he considers the rating should be reduced to 15. He asks that this Authority places that rating on the film whilst it is being shown in Salisbury.
- 2.2 There is no obligation on any authority to accept the British Board of Film Classification's ratings. Each Authority may raise or lower the rating of any film to be shown in their area.

**3. BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CLASSIFICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Licensing Officer has spoken to Ms Ross Bates and asked her to justify the 18 rating.
- 3.2 Ms Bates explained that the Board knew the film was very controversial and for that reason the director and president of the British Board of Film Classifications, together with two lay persons, viewed it.
- 3.3 It is the Board's view that biblical stories, as this film is, should be shown to as wide an audience as possible.

- 3.4 However, it was felt, with regret, that this film contains too high a level of violence of a sedition and sadistic nature. There is one scene in particular, lasting for 20 minutes showing Jesus being flogged with pieces of flesh being flayed off his body. Such a flogging would render a normal person dead or unconscious after 5/10 minutes but Jesus is alive during the whole 20-minute scene.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That this Authority retains a rating of 18 for the film 'The Passion of Christ'.

#### 5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS

Financial	:	None
Legal	:	None
Personnel	:	None
Community Safety	:	None
Council's Core Value	:	By accepting the recommendation it will enable the Authority to show that it supports the Board's decision and still provide an excellent service in line with the Council's core values.

(Please tick relevant box)

IMPLICATIONS	OFFICER	COMMENTS (incl)	NONE	NOT APPLICABLE
Legal				
Financial				
Personnel				
Environmental				

Co-ordinated with

Officer (s)

Unit (s)

**APPROVED :**

Leader : ..... Deputy Leader : .....