



COUNCIL MEETING – 2 November 2005

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14(2)b

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Culture Heritage and Sport

“Did the Portfolio Holder have an opportunity to see the Stewart Lee comedy performance at the Theatre Royal on 20th October 2005 and does the Portfolio Holder share Mr Lee’s belief that the IRA are a better class of terrorist because they often gave a telephone warning before their bombs went off.

Was the Portfolio Holder aware of the obscenely blasphemous nature of the “toilet” humour and does she feel that this is how the Council should spend £205,000. I would be interested to know whether the Portfolio Holder was disappointed that Jerry Springer – The Opera was not performed at the Theatre Royal.”

Reply

“I did not attend the performance Cllr Tait refers to although I assume from his question that he did. In the course of live show of this type a performer may say things or make references to matters which some people would not agree with or would not find amusing, but I am sure that I recall having heard a similar rather poor joke made on radio and television broadcasts. It would hardly be reasonable to base long term funding decisions about a major cultural asset on whether one agreed with the remarks of a single comedian. This show was billed as suitable for adults only and I would advise any person who did not wish to hear ‘toilet humour’ to attend one of the many other excellent plays or performances on offer at the Theatre Royal.

Programming is, quite rightly, a matter for the independent board of the Theatre Royal. As an observer on that I will provide feedback from the City Council as needed to assist in the achievement of a successful venue.

The touring professional production of Jerry Springer – the Opera would not fit into the Theatre Royal and I doubt an amateur production in Winchester is likely.”