



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Filming request – Belfast Zoo
Date:	14 June 2012
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>A filming request from production company working for Sky Atlantic's 'Twin Towns' TV series has been received.</p> <p>They have selected a family from Belfast to spend a week in Nashville, an American city twinned with Belfast. In this case both parents work in Belfast Zoo.</p> <p>The family will spend a week living with a Nashville family, and experience the American family's way of life including houses, jobs, schools and the local culture.</p> <p>A reciprocal visit to Belfast by the American family will take place with a similar experience being offered during their stay in Belfast.</p> <p>It is currently planned that filming during the American family's visit will take place in Belfast Zoo and the company are considering filming at sites across the City including City Hall and Titanic.</p> <p>We have been assured that the programme is a celebration of City Twinning and will be shown on the Sky Atlantic TV channel in both the UK and America, this series currently receives significant viewing figures of up to six million.</p> <p>We have consulted with Corporate Communications who have no issues with the request.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>A Belfast family have been approached by Sky Atlantic's production company to take part in the programme and both the parents of the selected family work in the zoo.</p> <p>Both parents have significant experience working with the media and TV production companies, as the family played a large role in UTV's 2008 TV programme about the hand rearing of Lily the Barbary lion at the Zoo.</p> <p>The TV programme attracts significant viewing figures and thus represents a significant opportunity to show case Belfast and the zoo to TV audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.</p> <p>Filming at the zoo will take place in early June. A legal agreement will prevent the television company from using footage until the Committee has considered this request and prevent its use should the committee refuse this request.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> All costs involved in the travel and filming of the TV programme will be covered by the production company.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Cover for the two members of staff while filming in America and subsequent time way from their normal working duties while filming with the American family in Belfast can be covered from within the zoo staff establishment.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> We consider that the filming will generate significant marketing opportunities for the Zoo and Belfast and provide another driver for tourism into the city from the USA.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	<p>The filming and subsequent showing of the programme on the Sky Atlantic channel has the potential to add enormously to good relations both in Belfast, Northern Ireland and in the USA.</p>

5	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the Committee agree to the filming for this TV programme subject to appropriate legal agreements being in place.</p>

6	Decision Tracking
	<p>The zoo manager will be responsible for the immediate implementation of the Committee's decision.</p>

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8	Documents Attached
	None.