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**Lesson 4: Researching candidates - AFTER EASTER PACK**

**Important - please read this information**

* Candidate names for the local council elections will be released on 11th April, which means schools will be on Easter break when this is announced. Schools return on 25 April, and our parallel vote is open between 3-5 May. So there are only 7 working days between returning after Easter, and the vote . Because of this, we've made two lesson packs which are slightly different depending on when you are able to teach them:
  + - **a before Easter version** which encourages pupils to do their own research during the Easter break
    - **an after Easter version** which relies on classroom work
* **You are currently reading the AFTER Easter version. The BEFORE Easter version is** [**on our resources page**](https://www.projectvote.wales/resources/).
* The BEFORE version can be done any time before Easter, and uses fake candidates to teach pupils about some of the sources and methods they could use to research real candidates when they are announced. They can use this learning to independently research the real candidates over the Easter break. The information they collect can then be used in the classroom after Easter. We also recommend that you as the teacher/group leader collect some information to supplement pupils' research. We've written clear advice and guidance to help you do this in the lesson plan, and we're also eager to help in any way we can.
* **The AFTER Easter assumes that pupils haven't done any research over Easter. For this to work in one lesson, we advise you as a teacher/group leader to gather information in advance. We've written advice and guidance to help you do this in the lesson plan. We're also maintaining** [**a web page with any useful links**](https://www.projectvote.wales/useful-info/) **we think might help you. And we're keen to help you in any way we can, just get in touch with us by emailing projectvote@childcomwales.org.uk.**
* Please contact us if you need support with finding the supporting materials - we are more than happy to help. Email projectvote@childcomwales.org.uk
* It's likely that you will have pupils who live in several different wards in your class or group. In local elections, we all vote for candidates to represent our ward; each local council area is divided into lots of wards. The easiest way to support pupils is for them all to focus on the same ward. You should decide beforehand which ward this will be. **We suggest using the school’s ward (using the school’s postcode) or possibly the ward of the nearest town/city centre (one that everybody in the class is familiar with).**
* The online parallel election will be open between 3rd – 5th May, to coincide with the real election. You will be sent a link to share with pupils.

**Good to know**

* This lesson is part of a series, you can find lessons 1 – 3 [here](https://www.projectvote.wales/resources/).
* The aim of this lesson is to support pupils to research candidates ahead of taking part in the Project Vote parallel election.
* We have included approximate timings (total of 50 minutes) but please adapt timings and content as best fits your class.

**Collecting information on candidates**

We advise you take the following steps to collect information on candidates'/parties' priorities:

* Use the website [www.whocanivotefor.co.uk](http://www.whocanivotefor.co.uk/) to see the names of candidates standing in your chosen postcode. Some of the candidates might have written personal statements that you could use as classroom resources. Candidates will be announced on 11 April, but it will take a few days for their details to appear on that website. So it's best to check from around 18 April.
* Consider emailing candidates directly on behalf of your class, and asking them what their priorities are. [We've written an email template for you.](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Email-template-for-teachers-2.docx) The website www.whocanivotefor.co.uk should include contact details if they're available.
* If there's no email direct email address for the candidate on the website, consider emailing the local party and asking them for their priorities for your area, [using our template](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Email-template-for-teachers-2.docx). The whocanivotefor website will say the name of the candidate's party, unless they are an independent candidate. You can then Google the local branch of the party, so for instance if you live in Swansea and you want to email the Conservative party, try googling 'Swansea Conservatives' to find their page.
* Collect leaflets to use in the classroom
* If there are links to candidates' social media profiles on their whocanivotefor profile, look out for content you could share with your class
* Google the names of the candidates and the name of your ward to see if there are any news pieces where they share their priorities
* [Use our web page](https://www.projectvote.wales/useful-info/) - which we'll be updating with useful information
* [Please contact us](https://www.projectvote.wales/contact/) if you're stuck and want help with this!

DELIVERING THIS LESSON **AFTER** EASTER

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| **Learning outcome** | **Activity** | **Additional information** |
| Re-cap on purpose of the lesson | Remind pupils that local council elections are happening in Wales in May 2022. 16 and 17-year-olds will be able to vote in local council elections in Wales for the first time. Remind them that they are taking part in Project Vote, a parallel election for schools and groups across Wales, specifically aimed at young people who are too young to vote in this year's election.  Explain that after learning about local council elections over the course of the last few lessons, pupils will now be developing their research skills to help them, to decide who to vote for. Pupils will then be able to vote for their chosen party online between **the 3rd – 5th May.**  In a round robin, ask pupils: can they remember any things that local councils have control over? [Show this picture of](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/streetscene_colour_finalflatcircled-scaled.jpg) the things local councils have control over to help them.  (5 mins) | You could play the [Project Vote video](https://youtu.be/71NLLgyK9o4) as a reminder. |
| Pupils consider reliability of different sources of information | Candidates are now campaigning in their areas - encouraging people living in the area to vote for them by saying what they will do if they are elected and how they will make the area better. Has anybody seen, heard or read anything about their local candidates recently?  Explain that you are going to be thinking about where people can find information about candidates’ ambitions.  Ask pupils to think of different sources of information or places they might find more out about candidates standing for election and write or type them on the whiteboard at the front of the class. Ask pupils to share some pros and cons for each source and write this on the board next to each source.  Explain that there are lots of different places that people can get information about elections and that they all have their merits. But, it’s important to be cautious that your information is factual and reliable.  (10 mins) | Some examples could include newspapers, social media, YouTube, party websites, leaflets & campaign materials, websites (e.g. whocanivotefor.co.uk)  **Extension activity** Ask pupils to consider these questions:   * Should people discuss their voting choices with friends and family or should it be private? * Are friends and family’s views reliable? * Should young people always vote the same way as their parents or carers? |
| Pupils learn to find basic information available about candidates  Pupils consider the impact of uncontested wards | Explain that one option for finding information about candidates standing for election is at <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>  Display the webpage at the front of the class or ask pupils to look at it on tablets/laptops/using a PC suite.  Enter your school’s postcode or a postcode in the ward you have chosen.  Ask pupils to point out what information they can see on the page.  You may want to point out that the website shows the candidate’s name, the party they represent (if applicable) and will sometimes show their personal statement, social media profiles or contact information.  **If your ward has more than one candidate:**  Ask pupils:   * What differences can you see between the candidates? * Does the profile help you know more about the candidate?   **If your ward has only one candidate (an uncontested ward):**  Tell pupils that some areas may have uncontested candidates. Can they guess what uncontested means?  Uncontested is when somebody is automatically elected because nobody else is running against them.  Ask pupils:   * Is this fair? * What do they think the impact is on the community if this happens?   If your ward is uncontested we've suggested two options in the right hand column >  (10 mins) | Explain that people can contact the candidate directly to find out more information or to find out what they plan to do about a particular issue.  You could explore uncontested candidates further by looking at this [BBC news article](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-39751858). Please note this article refers to the 2017 local council elections.  You could use another postcode to compare your school’s ward with another ward. You could ask pupils what’s different between the two.  **Options if your chosen ward is uncontested:**     * Choose a different postcode. For instance, if you’ve tried the school’s postcode, try a postcode in the nearest town or in a village where lots of the pupils live * Discuss further what the implications are for an area if only one person wants to stand as councillor. Would your pupils ever want to be a councillor? What would they focus on? Ask them to write their own personal statements. You could then ask if some would like to read out their statements to the class, and for other pupils to vote for their favourite. |
| Pupils begin to develop research skills | Divide pupils into groups. Assign each group one or more (depending on how many candidates are standing in your ward) of the candidates standing for election in your ward and give them all of the information you have collected about that candidate.  **See the Collecting Information on Candidates section at the top of this document.**  Explain that what they are reading are things a candidate promises to do if they are elected. They do this to persuade people to vote for them.  Ask pupils to read their extracts and discuss in their group. They will need to write a list or create a poster of the candidate’s key promises.   * Think/look back at your key priorities for local councils from Lesson 2. Does the candidate address these? What difference will this make in the community?   After they have done this, ask each group to present the key information they have discovered about their candidate to the rest of the class. If they have made posters, they could display these around the room and invite the rest of the class to look at them.  Ask pupils to reflect on their own personal priorities and consider which of the candidates best align with their views. They do not have to share their personal choices with the rest of the class.  (20 mins) | In addition to the types of sources of information already listed, you could contact the candidates directly and ask them to provide personal statements or campaign materials for the class. We have [an email template here which](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Email-template-for-teachers-2.docx) you can use to contact candidates.  You could collect key points from pupils and collate them in a central place for pupils to refer to again after the lesson. |
| Next steps and re-cap | Tell pupils that that they may wish to do additional research on the candidates before casting their vote. They can use the skills they learned in this lesson to perform their research. [They can use this template to support them.](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Local-Candidate-Research-Template.docx)  Before voting, they will need to know the name of the party their chosen candidate is a part of.  Or if their chosen candidate is Independent, they should note that.  When they complete the e-ballot between 3-5 May, they will choose from a list of parties, or 'Independent Candidate' if their favourite candidate doesn't belong to a party.  To finish, ask pupils to share a candidate’s name and party they represent and/or one of the candidates’ key priorities.  (5 mins) | **Extension activity** Pupils may wish to compare the candidates/parties standing for election in your chosen ward with those standing in the ward they live in (if different). Are there different parties standing in different wards? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this? |