**Lesson 4: Researching candidates - BEFORE 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 BEFORE Easter version. The AFTER 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 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, which is included 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](https://www.projectvote.wales/contact/) if you need support with finding the supporting materials - we are more than happy to help
* 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 the link on 29 April, 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.

DELIVERING THIS LESSON **BEFORE** 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](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/streetscene_colour_finalflatcircled-scaled.jpg) of the things local councils have control over to help them.  If you have pupils in the class who are eligible to vote in the real election, remind them that they must register before the end of **Thursday 14 April** at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>  (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 will be 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. 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 out more about candidates standing for election. Write or type them on the whiteboard at the front of the class. Ask pupils to share some pros and cons for 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 | 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 this postcode: TE1 1ST** to see a mock-up of how the site will look after candidates have been announced. **Llantalbot ward and all its candidates are fake.**  Click through some of the candidates and ask pupils:   * What information can you see? * What differences can you see between the candidates?   (5 mins) | Depending on responses from the class, 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.  Explain that from 18th April, the website will be updated with information for local council elections. This will help them choose who to vote for in their election. |
| Pupils begin to develop research skills | Ask pupils to imagine you are all residents of Llantalbot ward. Ask them to imagine their three top priorities are school transport, cycle paths and recycling.  This might be different to their real priorities but for the purpose of the exercise use these three.  Divide pupils into groups of 5 or 6. Give each group [a different candidate profile pack](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Candidate-packs.zip). **These are not real candidates** but will help pupils understand the type of information they might discover when researching the real candidates.  Explain that they are reading examples of things a candidate promises to do if they are elected. They have a mixture of:  -Personal statements  -Social media posts  -Manifestos (documents showing the goals of a particular party) of the parties that some of the candidates are a part of  Ask pupils to read the extracts in their pack and discuss in their group. Here are some things for them to consider:   * What is the candidate saying they will do if they are elected? Underline or circle the key promises. * Does the candidate address Llantalbot's (your class) key priorities?   Allow time for feeding back after pupils have looked at the information and discussed in their groups.  (20 mins) | **Extension activity** You could work as a class to email candidates, outlining pupils’ key priorities and asking what candidates will do about them. If you need support with this, please [get in touch](https://www.projectvote.wales/contact/) with our office. |
| Pupils consider the impact of uncontested wards | Explain that Llantalbot had several people running for election, but sometimes wards are uncontested. Can pupils guess what uncontested means?  It means someone’s automatically elected because they were the only one to puts themselves forward for election and nobody else is running against them.  Ask pupils:   * Is this fair? * What do they think the impact is on the community if this happens?   (5 mins) | 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. |
| Next steps and re-cap | Tell pupils that over the Easter break that they will need to research the candidates standing for election in your chosen postcode. This could be the school's postcode, or perhaps the nearest town. They can use the skills they learned in this lesson to perform their research.  They can use [this template](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Local-Candidate-Research-Template.docx) to support them as they do their research.  They'll need to look at the candidates standing and choose one they wish to vote for.  They will need to write down the name of the party that candidate is from.  If the candidate is an independent candidate, they should write down that the candidate is an independent candidate.  When we send schools/groups links to the e-ballot, they will then be able to choose their favoured party from the list, or select 'independent candidate'.  To finish, ask pupils to name a place that they can find information about the local election candidates.  You may also wish to supplement pupils’ research with your own, to support them. For example, you could email candidates standing in your ward using [this email template](https://www.projectvote.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Email-template-for-teachers-2.docx). **We've put a full list of suggestions at the end of this lesson plan**.  (5 mins)  **When pupils return after Easter**  You may wish to repeat this lesson's activity, which used the fake candidates, after the Easter break, but using the information that's been collected about the real candidates standing in your chosen ward.  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. | You could have somewhere central for pupils to upload information on the candidates as they do their research over the holidays. All pupils can then access this information and use it to decide who to vote for.  **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? |

**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.
* Consider emailing all of the 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. As well as contact details, they might also have published a manifesto.
* 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. For instance they might have posted their top priorities for the area, or a video about themselves.
* [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!