

Local Democracy in Lincoln Lesson Plan

Lesson length: 1 hour

Aims

- To understand the role of local government in Lincoln and elsewhere.
- To learn how local people of all ages can exercise their democratic rights.
- To gather young people's views on why some people might not vote in elections.

Resources (attached):

- Guide to local councils' responsibilities.
- A brief guide to the civic history of Lincoln.

Activities

Time	Activity
0 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the students what a government does and what kind of decisions it takes. • Discuss the way in which representatives are elected to take decisions on the people's behalf.
4 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the students whether they know the difference between local government and national government. • Outline some of the responsibilities of local councils, e.g. collecting rubbish, providing housing, and maintaining the roads.
7 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split the students into small groups and ask them to think of a project which could improve the lives of local people while considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will it be paid for ○ Who will benefit from it ○ Will other people be willing to support it
20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the groups to explain their idea to the rest of the class.
35 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the presentations have been made the groups should vote on which idea is best (students are not allowed to vote for their own ideas!).
38 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the votes have been counted and an idea has been chosen, ask the pupils if they think all government decisions across the whole country could be taken in the same way. • Explain that as communities grow it can be helpful for people to elect members of their community to take decisions on their behalf.
42 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the qualities voters might want from their representatives.
48 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that councils are made up by councillors, who take decisions on behalf of the voters in their neighbourhoods. • Note that in Lincoln the city is divided into 11 wards and outline some of Lincoln's civic history stretching back to the middle ages.
52 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that the majority of people do not vote in local elections,

and that this is especially true of young people. Ask the students whether they would vote in a local election and why.

56 mins

- Ask the students to talk about how they think local councillors might be able to use their roles to provide a link between communities and centres of power. Is this something that social media and the internet will change significantly over the coming years?

Guide to local councils' responsibilities.

Lincolnshire operates a two-tier system of local government, meaning that responsibilities are split between district councils (lower tier) and the county council (upper tier). In other parts of the country, an individual local authority can take responsibility for all local government services. Unlike much of the rest of Lincolnshire, the City of Lincoln Council does not host any parish councils.

It can often be confusing trying to work out which services are carried out by which local authority, especially for residents who are unaware of the distinction. The table below provides a short guide to the different services provided at each level of local government.

City of Lincoln Council	Lincolnshire County Council
Building control	Care of young, elderly, and disabled people
Car parks	County strategic planning
Council tax and housing benefits	Highways maintenance
Development control (planning)	Libraries and archives
Electoral registration and elections	Public transport
Environmental health	Registration of births, marriages, and deaths
Housing	Schools and other education
Leisure	Street lighting and furniture
Licensing	Traffic management and planning
Property and land searches	Water courses
Rubbish collections	

A brief guide to the civic history of Lincoln.

Mayor

The Mayoralty of Lincoln dates from 1206 when Adam of Lincoln is recorded as holding the post. Today the Mayor is the first citizen of the City, and his or her official home is the Guildhall, which has been used by the Council since 1520. His or her full title is the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lincoln.

He or she wears a red robe, a white jabot (a frilly covering to the front of a shirt), chain of office, white gloves and carries his staff of office. The Chain of Office dates back to 1960 and recalls the time in the 14th century when Lincoln held the wool staple and was a considerable port.

The role of the Mayor has changed significantly over the years and the postholder is now a local ward councillor. Councillors are chosen according to how long they have served on the Council. The Mayor's term of office is for one year, normally commencing in May.

The Council has had 12 female Mayors, with the first being Maria B. Nevile in 1925. The current mayor is the 808th Mayor of the city.

The role of the Mayor is mainly ceremonial. He or she pays a large number of visits across the city and the country taking part in local events and openings. The Mayor also chairs meetings of the City of Lincoln Council.

Sheriff

The City Sheriff dates back to 1409 when originally there were two appointed annually. Since 1835 only one Sheriff is now chosen annually by the Mayor. On civic occasions, he or she wears a black robe trimmed with velvet, white jabot, chain of office and white gloves. Past and present sheriffs presented the Chain on Queen Victoria's Jubilee Day in 1887. The shields are double-sided and carry the name of City Sheriffs until 1959 when the practice was discontinued. Lincoln is one of only fifteen cities to have the role of City Sheriff.