

Citizenship KS3

Years 7 - 9

Unit 7: Local democracy

LHI project: Kippax Integrated Design Statement - www.lhi.org.uk/kippax

Kippax is a former mining village in Yorkshire. The local community has set up a project to write and publish a Village Design Statement. Volunteers used questionnaires, public meetings, displays and consultation to involve the whole community in the decision-making process.

Learning objectives:

To examine community issues, how local decisions are made and how public opinion can influence change.



Local protest

Who decides what?

Divide the class into small groups or pairs. Give each group a local issue, eg building on green belt land, holding a music festival in the park, improving recycling facilities, lowering the speed limit outside the school. Ask the children to list the different interest groups for that issue and if they would be for or against the proposal. Discuss which local government department is responsible for decision making in each case. What course of action could local people take if they wanted to actively object or support the proposal?

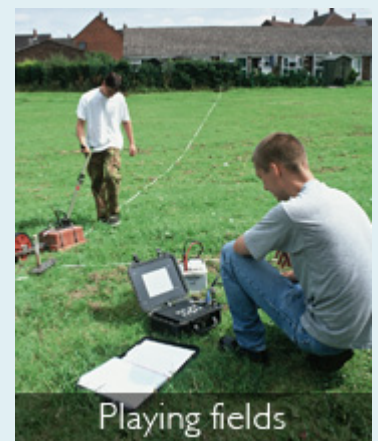
Questions and questionnaires

Ask the pupils to work in pairs and give each a copy of the Kippax High School questionnaire summary. Each pair must pick a topic from the summary (eg, use of leisure facilities, transport use) and write a short questionnaire designed to gauge public opinion. Year 9 pupils can swap questions with another pair. They must decide whether their neighbours' questions would produce an unbiased response from the public. If not, how could the questions be re-phrased?

Press release

Ask the class to imagine that their school playing fields are being sold to a housing developer. Would they be for or against such a sale? Ask them to list their reasons and to think about possible supporters in the community. Print out a press release from www.direct.gov.uk for the children to read. Discuss the information it contains and ask the class to consider what the opposite point-of-view might be.

For homework pupils can write a press release about the school selling its playing fields, outlining the issue from their perspective. Next lesson pupils must suggest where they would send their release (local paper, council, sympathetic pressure group etc).



Playing fields

For more information about this and other LHI projects visit www.lhi.org.uk