
Wind Energy Report

An Analysis of Surveys Carried Out in
Montgomeryshire

By Russell George AM

September 2014

Overview:

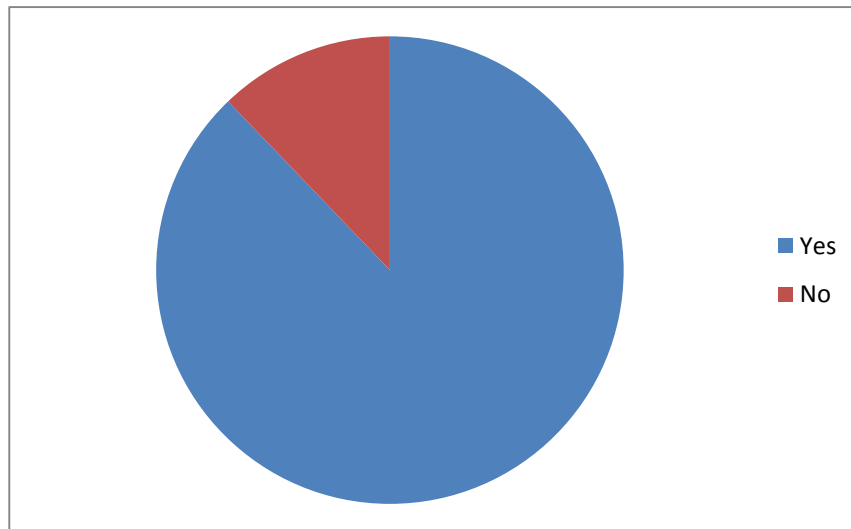
A survey has been conducted over the period September 2013 to July 2014 in order to formulate a consensus of views across Montgomeryshire on wind energy and the proposed Mid-Wales connection project. Residents were able to complete the survey either online or by hard copy. Measures have been taken to ensure there are no duplicates e.g. two surveys filled in by the same person. All names were checked before being entered into the database to ensure that people could only appear on the results once. Furthermore, addresses were also checked to guarantee that only residents in Montgomeryshire could be included in the final results. 802 people responded to the survey.

Summary of Conclusions - Survey on the Mid Wales Connection Project and Wind Energy

Of the Montgomeryshire residents that answered the survey:

- Residents overwhelmingly thought the Mid Wales Connection Project would be negative for tourism, property prices and the visual amenity of the area.
- 88% of people are supportive of renewable energy.
- 68% of people thought that an increased focus on wind by Welsh Government was not a realistic way of combating climate change.
- 75% believe that Powys does not have a sufficient road infrastructure to support the proposed level of developments.
- With regards to the Welsh Government's planning policy on wind power development and its Technical Advice Note guidance (TAN 8), 71% of people believed it did not have sufficient public consultation and that it should now be fully reviewed.
- With regards to the National Grid, 60% of people believe that National Grid had not openly listened to the views of communities, and 82% of people have not changed their view of the project following the decision that a quarter of the connection route would be underground.
- 45% of people felt that the presence of a wind turbine in their communities would have a positive effect. This is in contrast with other answers and a conclusion could be drawn that there is less opposition for single wind turbines than for the large scale proposals for the connection project and large wind farms.

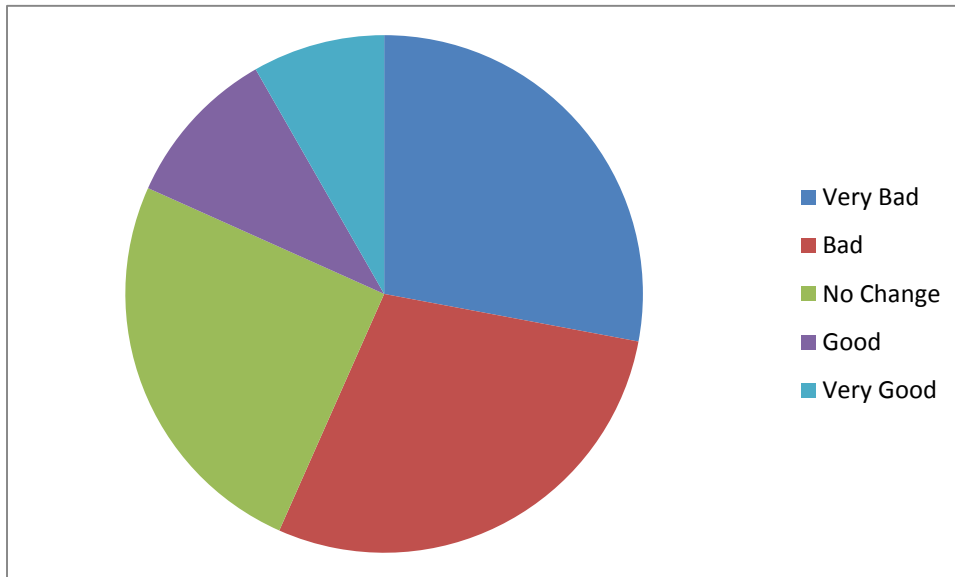
1) Are You Generally in Favour of Renewable Energy?



The survey asked several basic questions. Firstly, it asked for views on renewable energy. The results revealed that people were overwhelmingly in favour of renewable energy, with 88% of the 789 that responded to the first question saying they were generally in favour of renewable energy. Only 12% indicated that they were not generally in favour of renewable energy.

2) National Grid's Pylon Connection Project will mean more pylons and wind turbines across the region. What effect do you think this will have on the following?

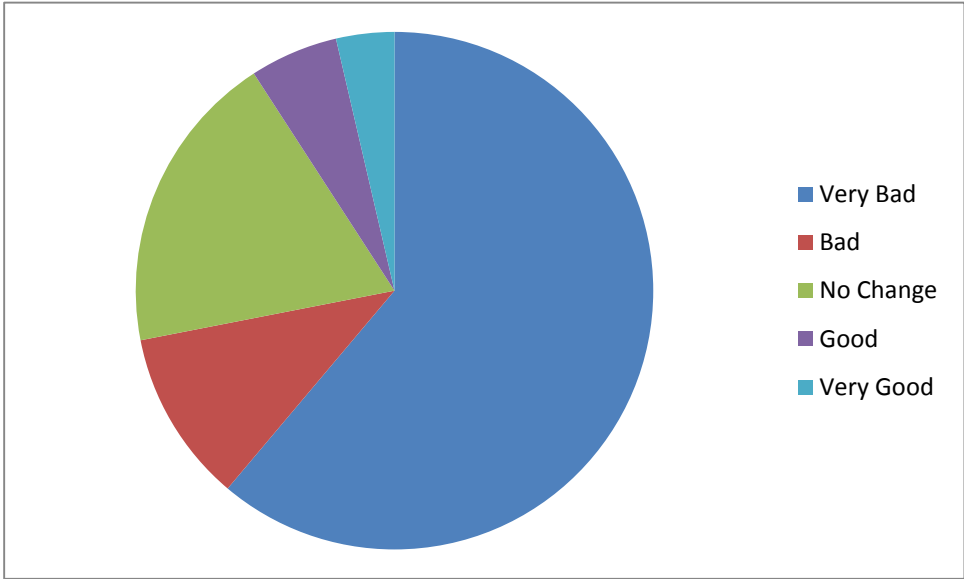
Farming:



Residents were then asked how they thought the proposed Mid-Wales connection project would affect various sectors of the community. Overall, 57% of people believed that it would have a negative impact on farming, stating it would have a very bad or bad effect on the industry, with 25% believing that it would have no impact at all. The remaining 18% thought that it would have a positive impact on farming.

2) National Grid’s Pylon Connection Project will mean more pylons and wind turbines across the region. What effect do you think this will have on the following?

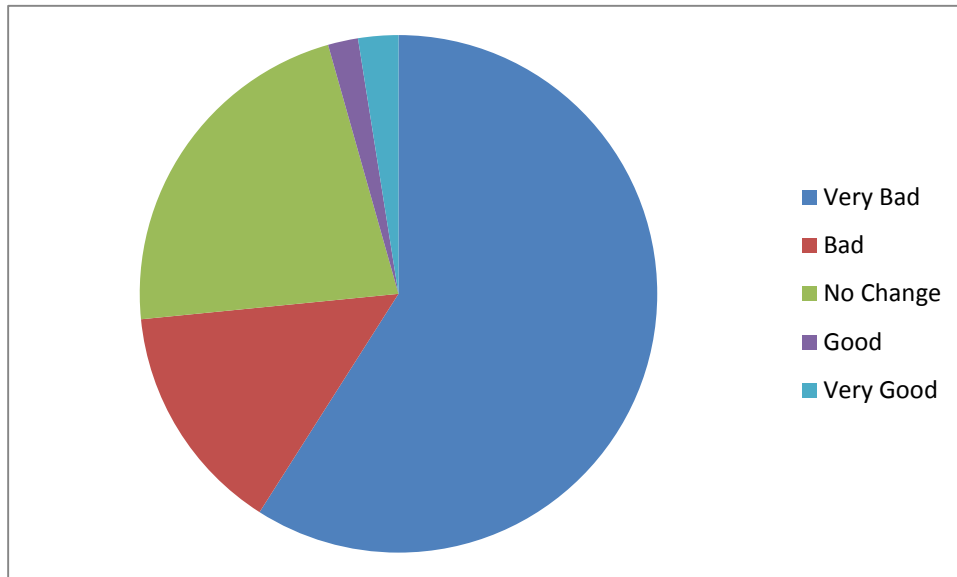
Tourism:



The majority of people believed that the Mid Wales Connection Project would have a negative impact on tourism. 72% of constituents stated that they would have a very bad or bad effect on the industry. 19% believed that it would have no impact at all, whilst 9% thought it would have a positive effect on Tourism.

2) National Grid's Pylon Connection Project will mean more pylons and wind turbines across the region. What effect do you think this will have on the following?

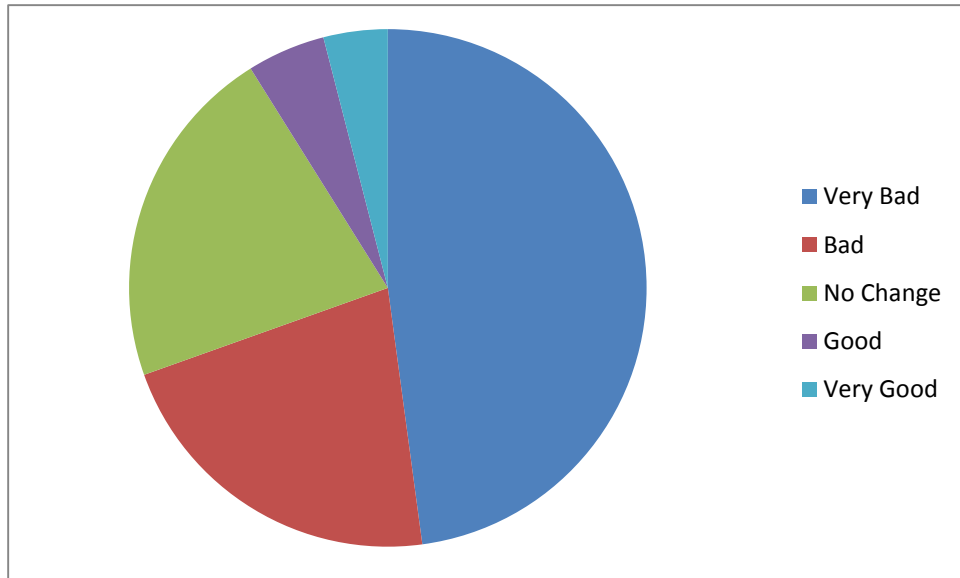
Property Prices:



An area where people felt overwhelmingly that the building of wind turbines and pylons would have a detrimental impact was property prices. 73% of those surveyed thought that property prices would be very badly or badly affected by the proposals.

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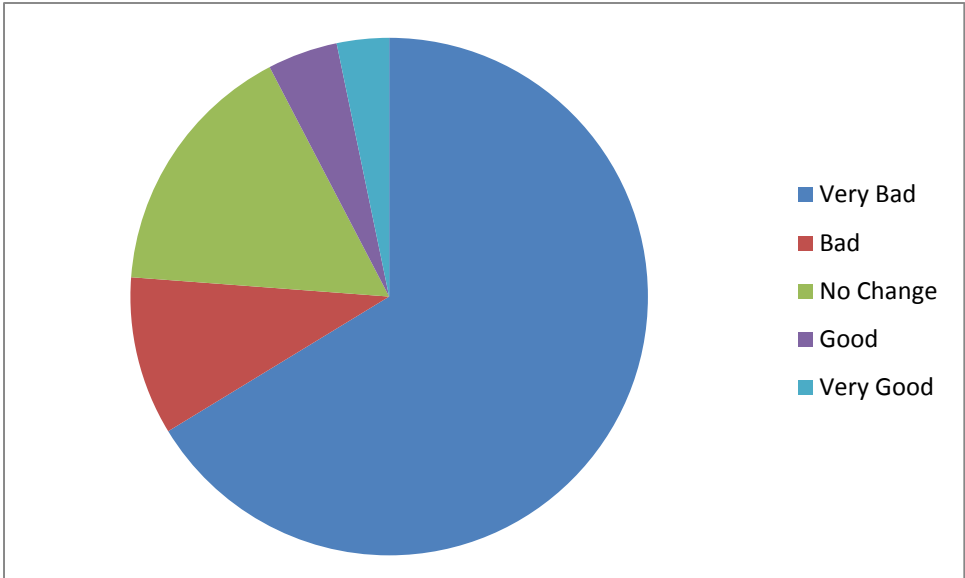
Wildlife:



Residents were asked how they thought wildlife would be affected by the proposals. 70% of those surveyed thought that the impact on wildlife would be bad or very bad. 22% believed it would have no impact at all, whilst 18% of people thought it would have a good effect.

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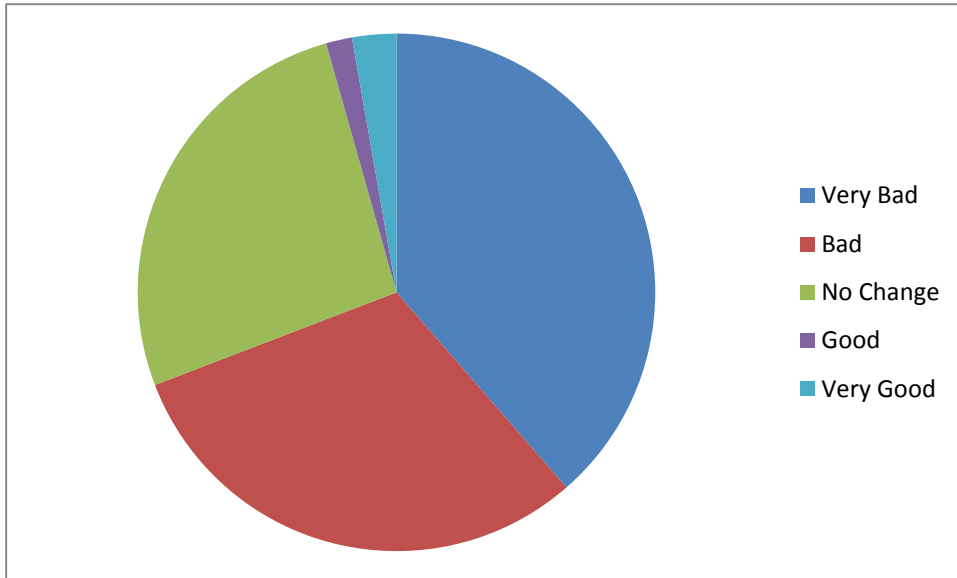
Visual Amenity:



With regards to the visual amenity of the area, 74% of people thought that the increase in the number of wind turbines and pylons would be bad or very bad. 16% of people believed that there would be no impact at all on the visual amenity of the area whilst 7% of people believed that it would have a good or very good impact.

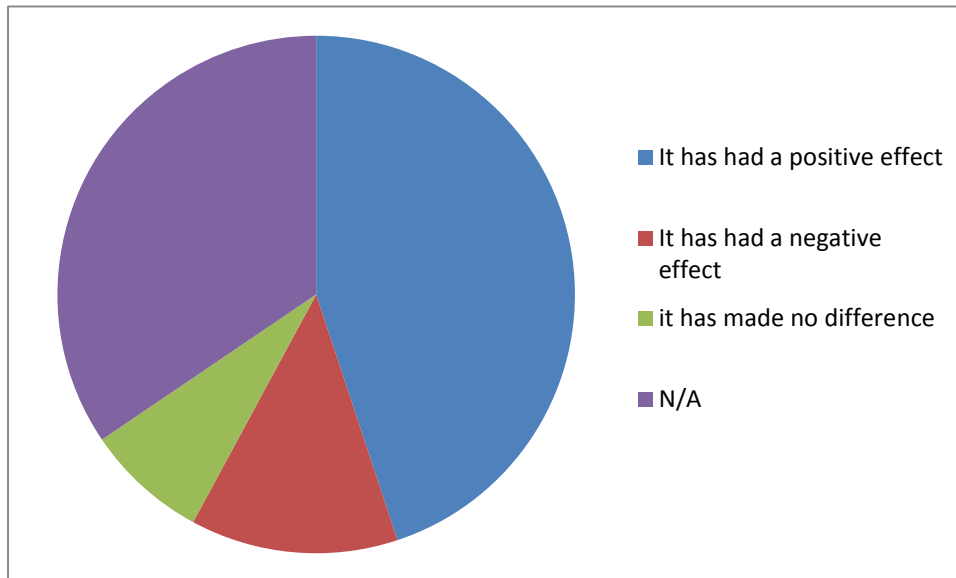
2) National Grid's Pylon Connection Project will mean more pylons and wind turbines across the region. What effect do you think this will have on the following?

Noise Pollution:



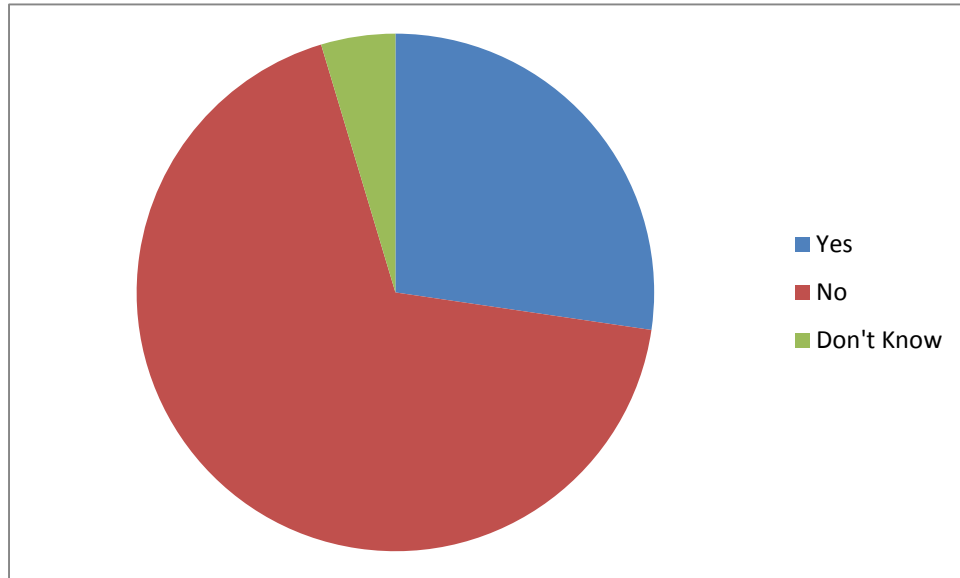
Residents were then asked what effect the Mid Wales Connection Project would have on noise pollution. 68% of people believed that noise pollution would increase should the project go ahead. 26% believed there would be no change at all whilst 5% thought that the project would have a positive effect on noise pollution.

3) If applicable, what effect, if any, would you say the presence of a wind turbine has had in your local area?



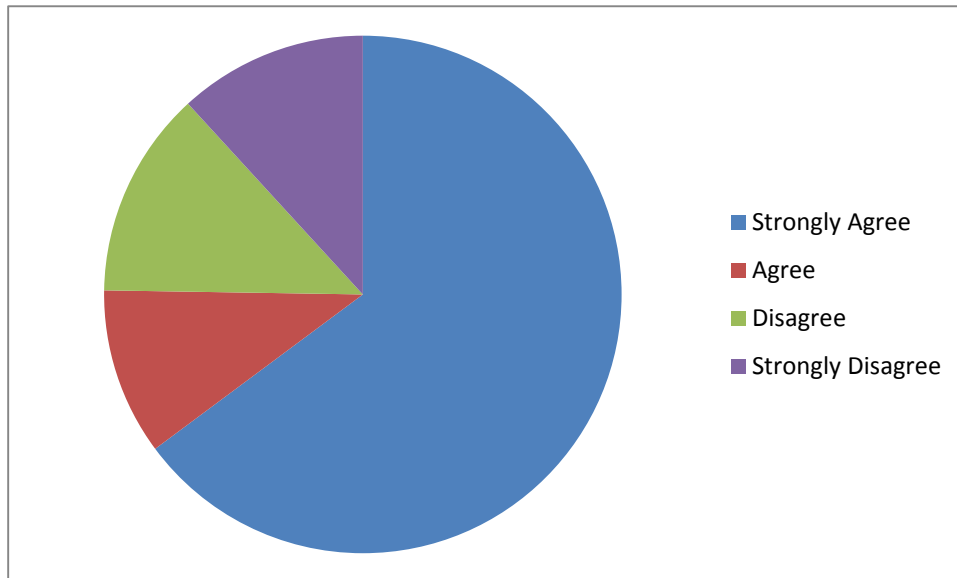
The survey asked residents what effect wind turbines have had in their local area. Of the 786 people who responded to the question, 271 answered that the question was not applicable (34%). 45% of those who answered said that wind turbines had a positive impact on their local area. 13% believe that they have had a negative impact, and 8% said that they had no impact whatsoever.

4) Do you think the Welsh Government's increased focus on wind energy is a realistic way of combatting climate change?



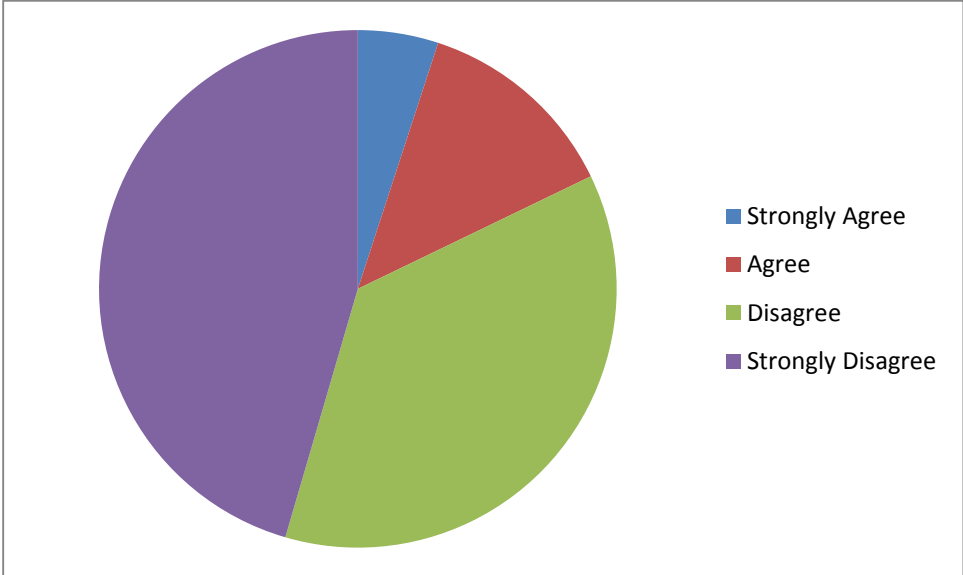
Residents were asked if they believed that the Welsh Government's increased focus on wind energy was a realistic way of combating climate change. 68% of people believed that an increased focus on wind was not a realistic way of combating climate change. 27% of people believed that it was a realistic way of tackling climate change, whilst 5% of people felt that they did not know.

5A) What is your opinion on the following statement: Powys does not have the road infrastructure to transport abnormal loads for wind farm developments.



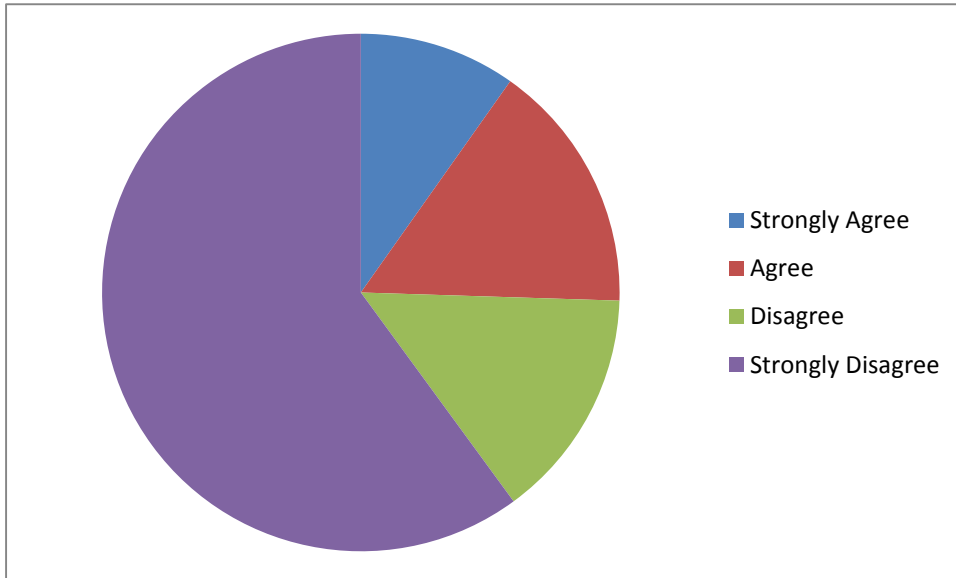
Question 5 asked for people's opinions on four different statements. The first of these said "Powys does not have the road infrastructure to transport abnormal loads for wind farm developments". Over 75% of people believed that Powys did not have the road infrastructure to support abnormal loads in regards to development of wind farms. 25% of people thought that Powys did have the road infrastructure to support the developments.

5B) What is your opinion on the following statement: The National Grid's decision to locate a quarter of its connection route underground has changed my view of the project.



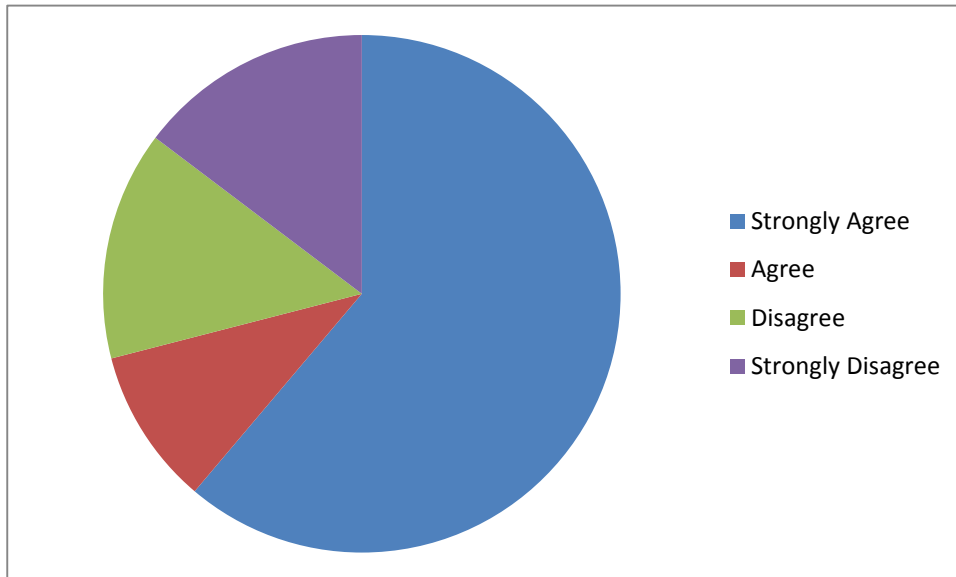
The second part of question 5 asked people whether National Grid's decision to put a quarter of the line underground had altered their opinion of the Mid-Wales connection project. 18% of people's views had been changed by the decision, whilst 82% of people's opinions had not been changed.

5C) What is your opinion on the following statement: The National Grid's Pylon Connection Project will have a positive effect on local areas



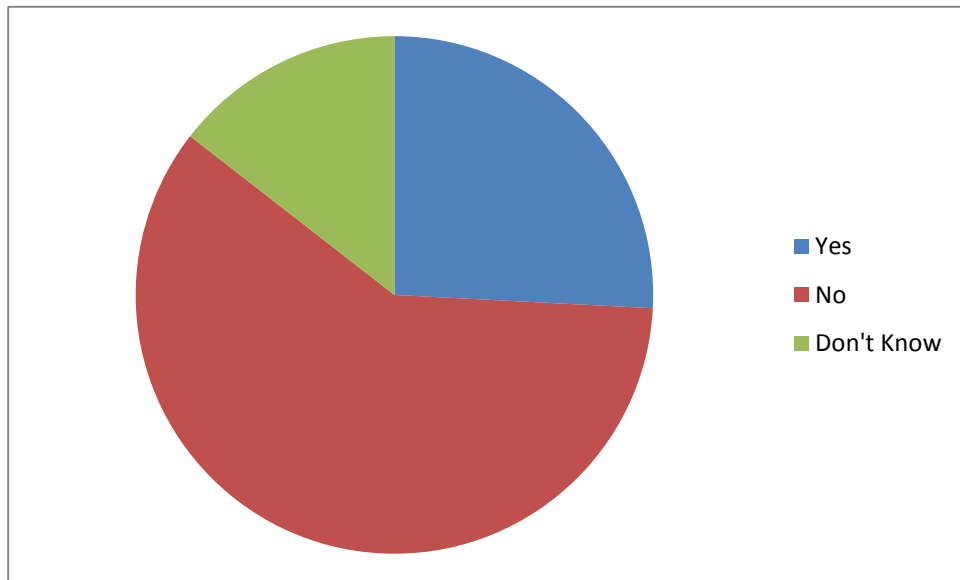
The survey asked if residents thought that the Mid-Wales connection project would have a positive impact on local areas. 74% of people disagreed that the project would have a positive impact on the local area. 26% of people agreed with the statement.

5D) What is your opinion on the following statement: TAN8 (the Welsh Government advice note that encourages wind farms to be built in local communities) did not have enough public consultation and needs a full review.



The last part of question 5 stated that TAN 8 did not have enough public consultation and that it needs a full review. 71% of people believed that this was the case. 29% of people disagreed with the statement.

6) Do you think that National Grid has openly listened to community views during its consultation?



The last question of the survey asked whether residents believed that the national grid had openly listened to the community's views during consultations. 60% of people believed that the National Grid had not done this, 26% believed they had and the remaining 14% said they did not know.