

Sport Northern Ireland

Policy Position on Access to the Natural Environment for Sport and Physical Recreation

Context

By 2015 to have amended public policy frameworks to protect and promote access to and sustainable use of publicly owned land in Northern Ireland for sport and physical recreation

Sport Northern Ireland

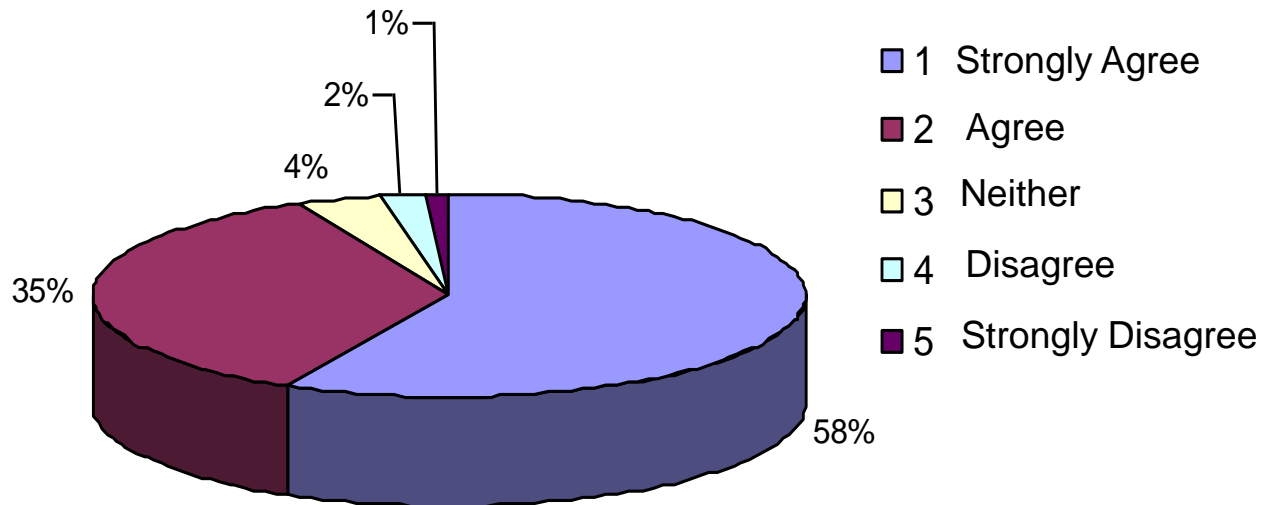
Policy Position on Access to the Natural Environment for Sport and Physical Recreation

Feedback from online survey

There were 96 responses to the online survey and a further 5 paper responses

Question 1

Is the principle of self responsibility and environmental awareness appropriate?

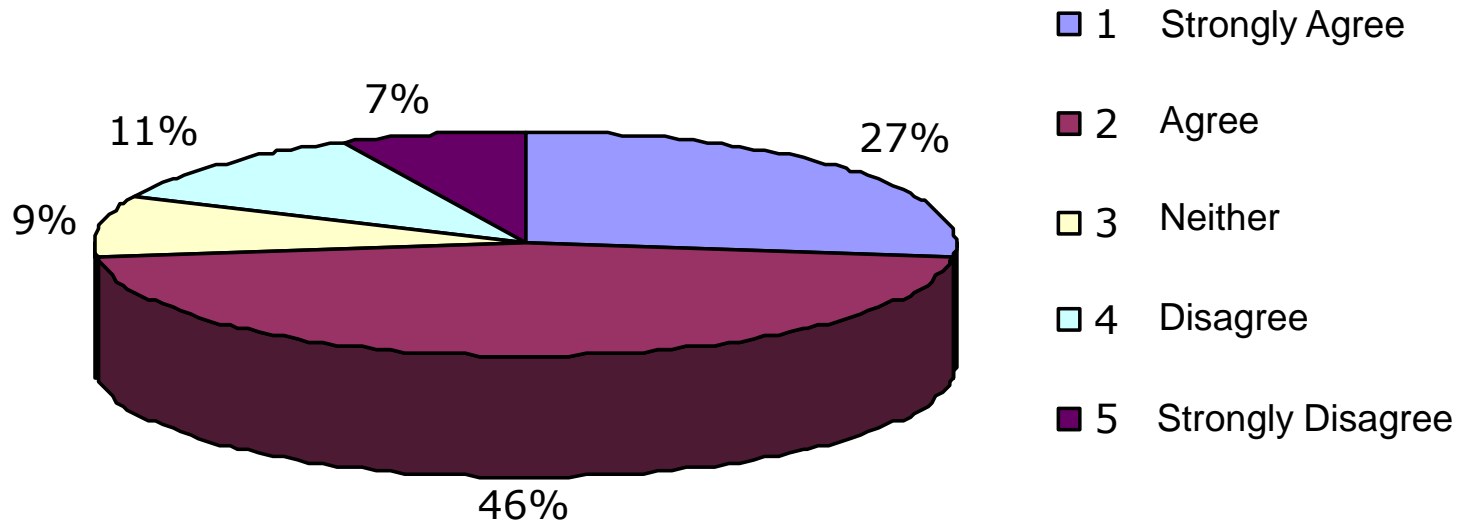


93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Highlights the importance of LNT and the dissemination of the Occupier's Liability research.

Question 2

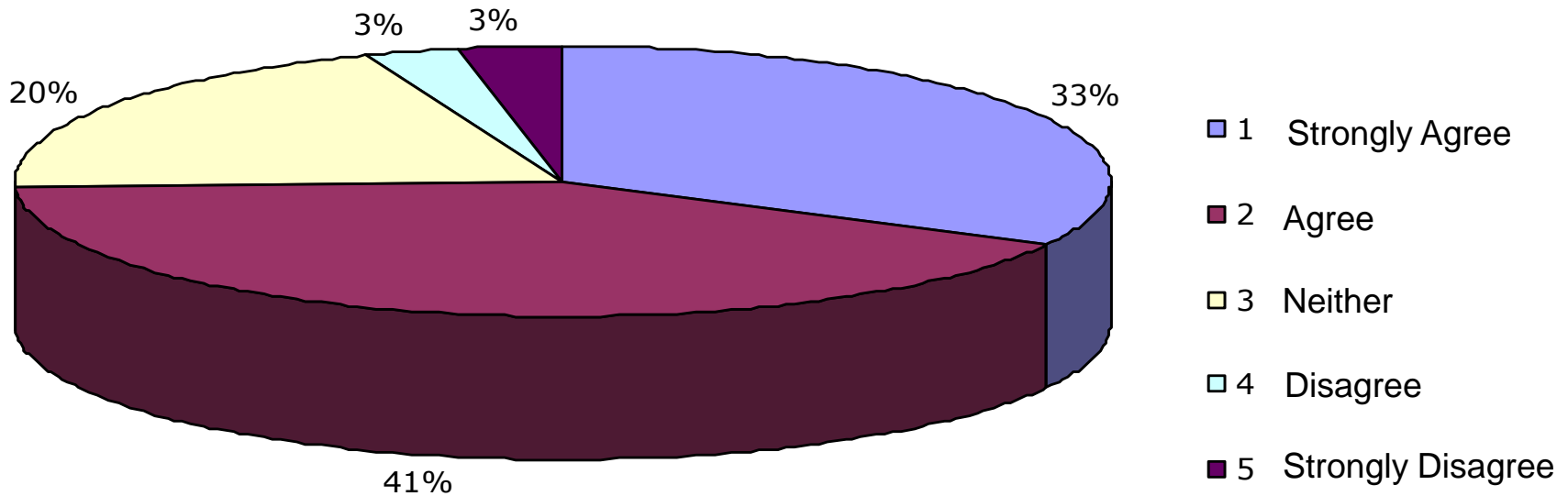
Should access to private land be principally through agreement rather than assertion - i.e. permissive path type?



73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Question 3

Is the model of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 for all suitable public land the right approach for outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland?

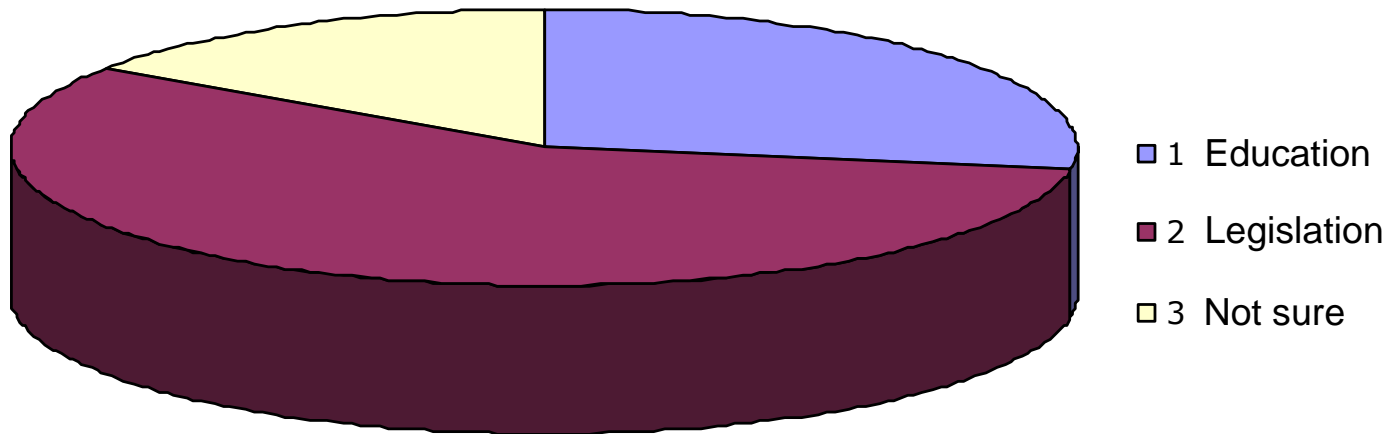


73.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Very strong public support for this and for legislative change. This needs to be reflected as a priority in the new Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.

Question 5

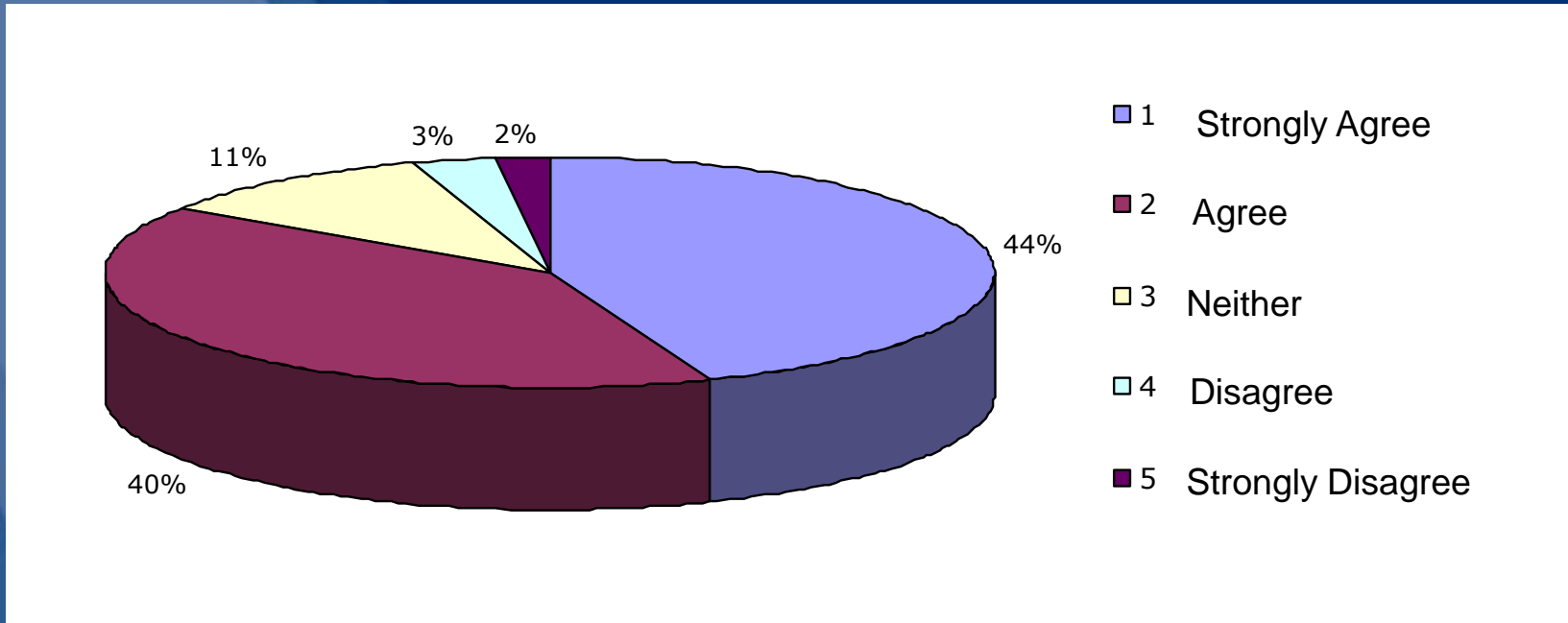
Should Land owners be protected from irresponsible users and heightened liability through an education process for users and landowners or through some form of legislative process



While DoE believe that there should be no change to Occupier's Liability Legislation – this does not appear to view of respondents – the majority of whom felt there was a need for legislative change. Further action by all parties needs to be taken to dispel myths and to promote understanding.

Question 7

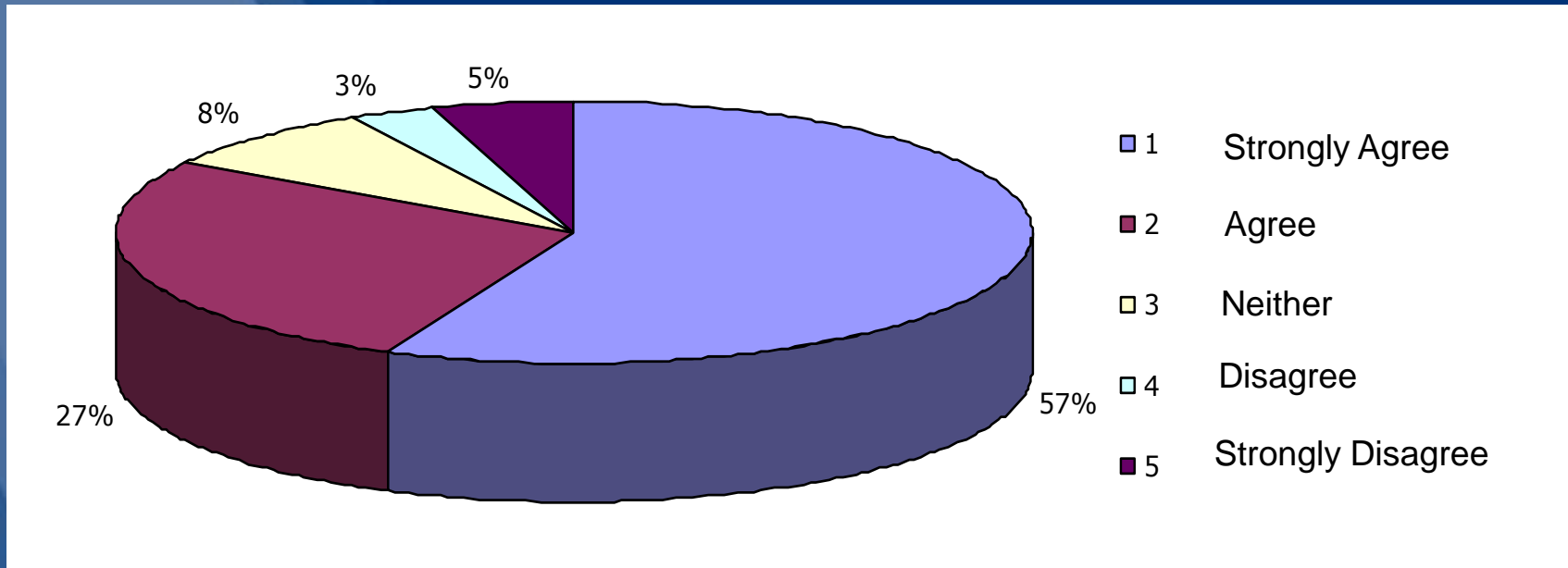
Should navigable inland waterways be afforded the equivalent status to public land in terms of access?



There is a very strong call for access to navigable inland waterways

Question 8

Should targets be set for District Councils in order that they carry out their function to provide a reasonable network of public rights of way and permissive paths?



NIEA are currently mapping by GIS all the PROW's. A recommendation of the new Outdoor Recreation Action Plan should set to set up a working group / forum to form a picture of the needs.

Summary

- 1. There must a strong focus on increasing access to public land for sport and physical recreation.*
- 2. Access to inland waterways needs to be developed*
- 3. Communication of the reality of the existing Occupiers' liability legislation and acceptance of risk by participants is critical.*
- 4. Increasing and improving a high quality paths structure through PROW's and permissive agreements must be a crucial element within the new Outdoor Recreation Action Plan*
- 5. The development of definitions of responsible and sustainable ways of participating in outdoor sports will need to be undertaken.*