

# 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

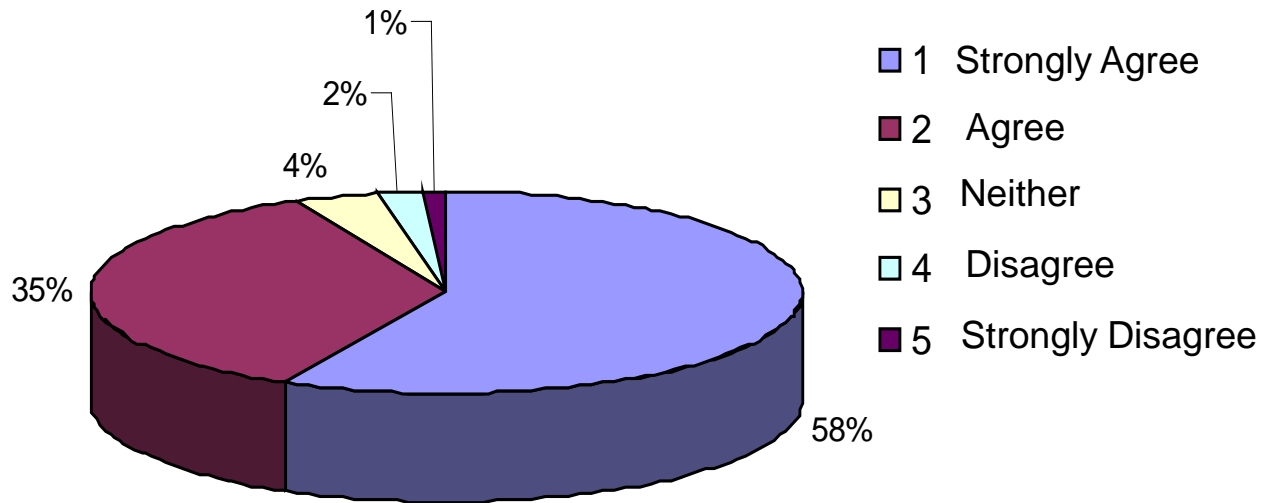
## Policy Position on Access to the Natural Environment for Sport and Physical Recreation

### 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?

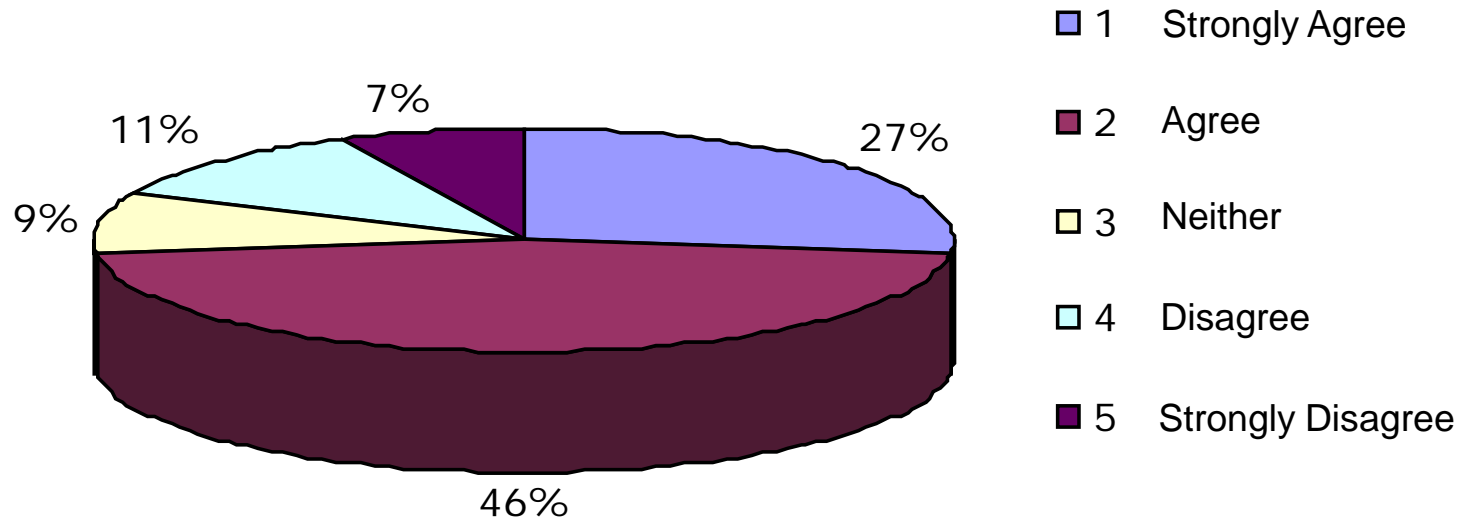


**93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.**

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

# Question 2

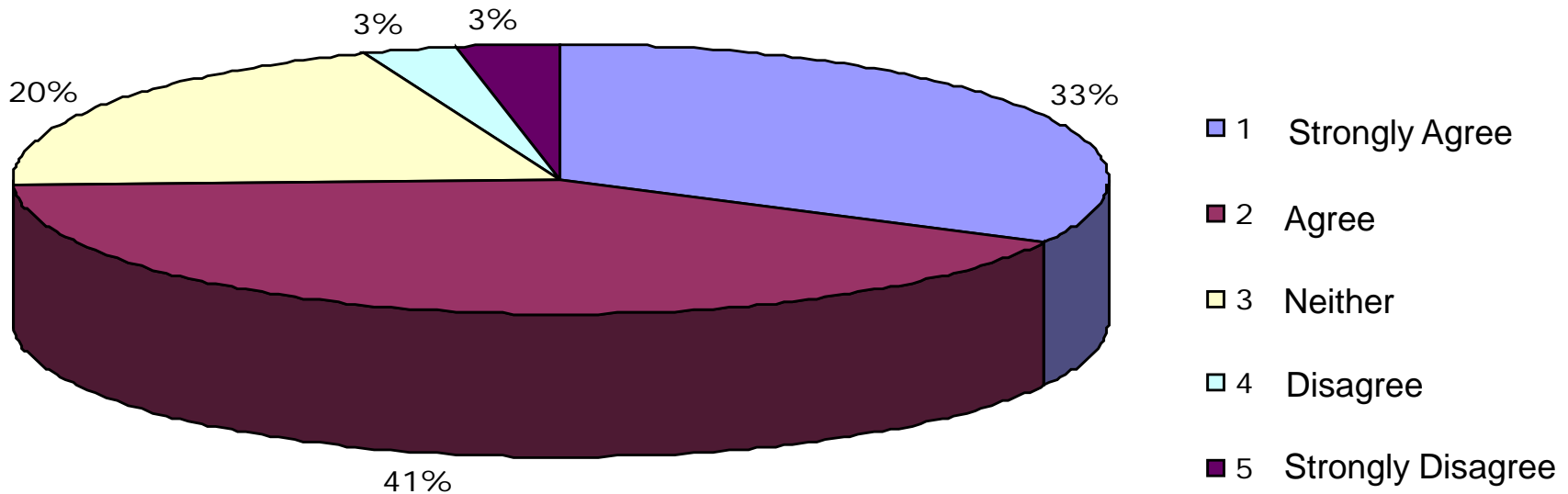
Should access to private land be principally through agreement rather than assertion - i.e. permissive path type?



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?

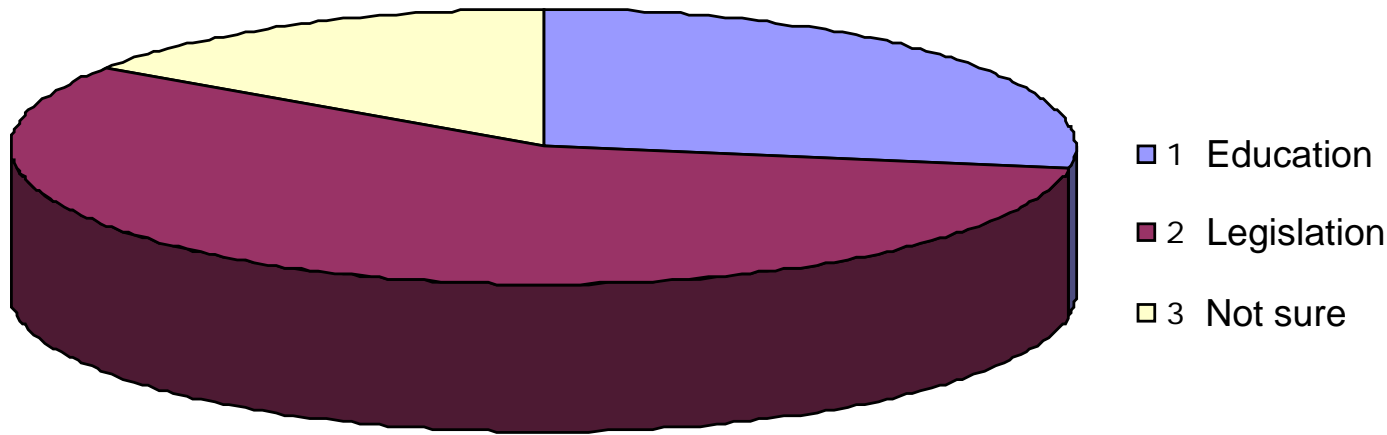


73.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

***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

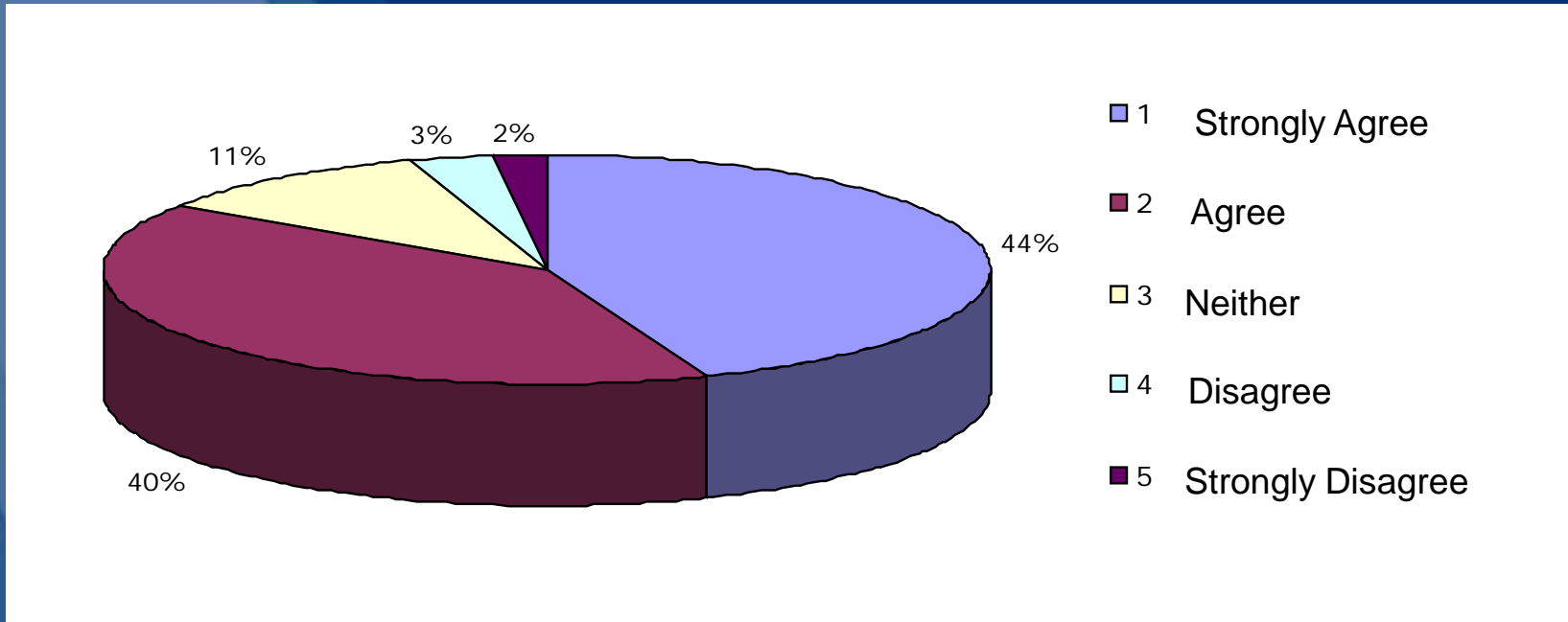
Should Land owners be protected from irresponsible users and heightened liability through an education process for users and landowners or through some form of legislative process



***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

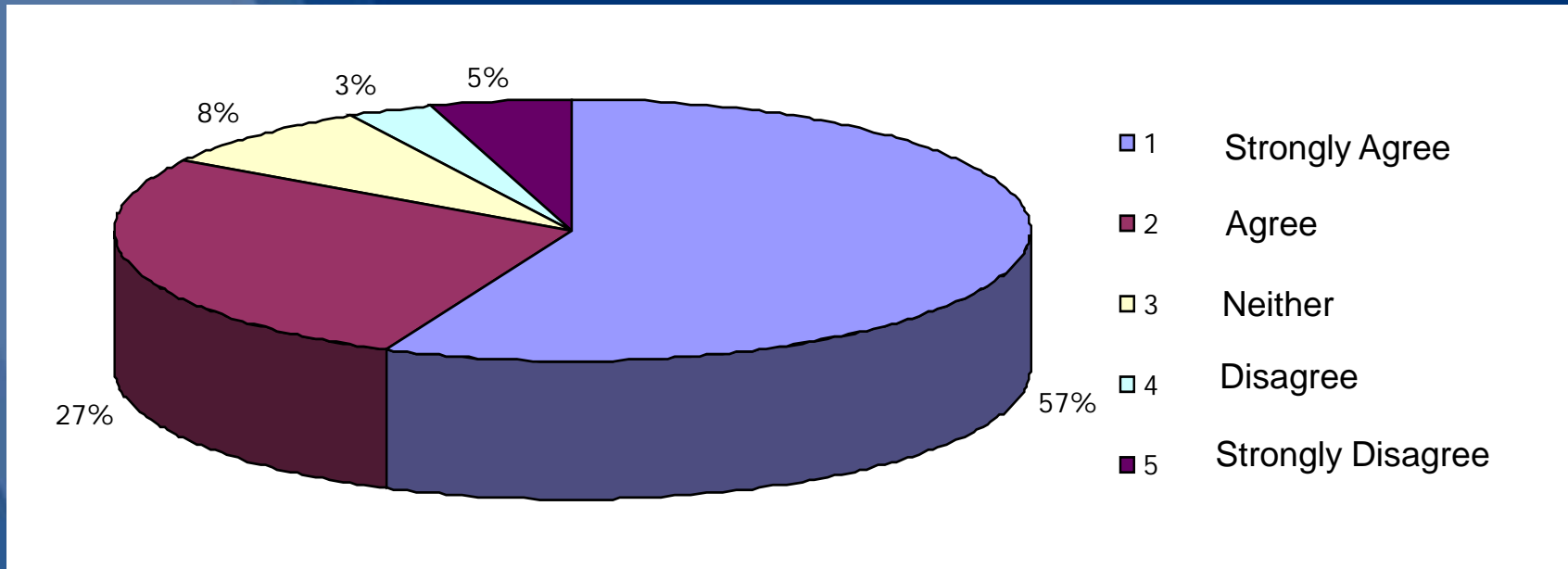
Should navigable inland waterways be afforded the equivalent status to public land in terms of access?



***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.*