

Fixed Gear on Rock Climbs in North Wales

- an on-line debate, organised through the BMC.

23 February 2021

Pre-Debate Notes:

Thank you for registering for the 'Fixed Gear on Rock Climbs in North Wales' debate, open to all climbers in the UK, including non-BMC members. Please encourage young climbers to join the discussion too – the future of climbing lies in their hands.

The debate will be introduced and chaired by Tim Jepson, on behalf of BMC Cymru (North Wales).

Format:

This on-line debate will follow a pre-set agenda designed to ensure that the complex and controversial topic of Fixed Gear is given a purpose and structure. The Chair will present a number of questions around which attendees can debate the issues, and then offer opinions via Zoom polls.

The opportunity for individual contribution to discussion will inevitably depend on the numbers wanting to contribute, but the expectation is that those attending will be muted for most of the time, except when invited to address the meeting. The 'Raised Hand' and 'Chat-Room' functions will be available throughout. All contributions will be respected and valued.

Outcomes:

This debate is only one step in a process; please don't expect any definitive outcomes on the night. BMC Cymru (North Wales) wants to explore climbers' opinions in respect of Fixed Gear on Rock Climbs, with the hope of eventually finding a consensus position which can be shared in the form of recommendations or guidelines for climbers, present and future, operating in North Wales.

No climber, climbing club or climbers' organisation has the authority to regulate or enforce any guidelines concerning fixed gear, however powerful their arguments. The only power we have is the power of persuasion.

I hope that the agenda below results in a discussion which meets your aspirations and expectations.

Tim Jepson
Chair of BMC Cymru (North)

AGENDA

1. Introduction – Fixed Gear on Rock Climbs in North Wales

- Nothing new?
- Why the issues need to be revisited.
- Recent developments.
- The scope of the debate.

2. Factual Information about the Design and Placement of Stainless Steel Peg-Bolts

3. When, where and how should Stainless Steel Peg-Bolts be used in North Wales?

4. Commonly declared Solutions. Could they present a simple way forward?

- a. 'Like for Like' (Like what?)
- b. 'Case by Case' (Who decides?)
- c. 'No Fixed Gear on Trad Craggs' (Including abseil points and stances?)

5. Preserving the Variety

- Does the following statement have value?
- Will it stand up to the scrutiny of future generations of climbers?

BMC Cymru (North) greatly values the rich history of rock climbing in North Wales which has resulted in an unrivalled variety of world-class rock climbs covering the full spectrum of climbing styles from multi-pitch adventure climbs to single-pitch sports climbs to bouldering.

Climbing in North Wales provides opportunities for climbers of all abilities to experience a wide range of environments, encounter a wide range of rock types and appreciate a wide range of climbing styles.

A critically important aspect of climbing in North Wales has been the acceptance of strong ethical principles setting limits on the placement of fixed gear, typically pegs, bolts and slings. These ethics maintain the adventurous character of climbs which can be protected by 'traditional', removable equipment.

Before placing, replacing or removing any piece of fixed gear, BMC Cymru (North) urges resident and visiting climbers to consider very carefully the local, often complex, ethics which currently preserve the unique history, traditions, values and variety of climbing in North Wales.

Thank you!