

Creating safe stopover spaces for

MOTORHOMES

in Dumfries and Galloway



RESPECT - PROTECT - ENJOY



Introduction

With a rise in the number of motorhomes visiting or staying in Scotland there has been an increased interest in the provision of continental style Aires. Aires epitomise the freedom of motorhome holidays allowing visitors to easily access beautiful countryside and local communities, with the ability to stay overnight or for short periods at unique locations.

Aires are considered to be a convenient stopover whilst touring an area rather than a holiday destination in themselves. Aires are provided specifically for use by motorhomes rather than caravans and tents etc. A motorhome is not considered to be classed as camping because it is self-sufficient i.e. the occupants can cook, eat, and sleep within the motorhome and often have an onboard toilet and waste-water collection too.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises the desire from motorhome owners for small, simple and low-cost locations for short stopovers in our region that can provide a quieter, simpler pitch than the full service offered by caravan and camping sites, as they travel between these for their longer holiday. This can present an additional income opportunity for communities who may have a small area of land or a number of car park spaces at their village/community hall. These areas could be utilised to generate additional income for the community managed facilities whilst drawing visitors to their areas and other locally available services and attractions.

Why set up an Aire?

Hoseasons predict that the staycation boom of 2021 will continue into 2022. In addition market analysis indicates an 8.25% growth in motorhome sales in 2021 with little sign of demand subsiding, 250,000 motorhomes were already registered in Britain at the end of 2020.

Aires can be relatively low-cost to set-up and they can be used all year round, or for shorter seasonal periods, depending what would work best for your facility. The site can be unmanned and payment taken either by an honesty box or via a simple payment system such as Ringo or Just Park where site users pay via an app on a smart phone. Unlike formal campsites there is no expectation by users that they will book in advance and as such no booking system is needed, unless your group would prefer this. As most motorhomes are self-contained there is no requirement/expectation to provide onsite facilities such as toilets and showers and electric hook-ups, although additional facilities could allow you to consider increased fees for their use.



What would an Aire need to provide?

An Aire can be as simple as providing a safe overnight parking space. Ideally, there would be a provision of a basic water supply and waste disposal/bin (recycling) if possible. Grey waste disposal, refilling of water tanks and disposal of rubbish could then also be offered to passing motorhomes, for a small fee, who are not parking overnight, as this is a service that is also in short supply and is another way of boosting the revenue from the site. CAMpRA have found that some Aires generate more income from this service offering than from overnight parking. The facilities a community group choose to provide will depend on the site itself and the ease of providing additional services e.g. electric hook-ups/water. It is preferable that the ground is reasonably level. Due to the weight of motorhomes grass is not suitable unless reinforcement is used. Hard standing will allow year-round use.

Depending on your site it would be beneficial to consider the following:

- **Safety** - Any safety hazards must be thoroughly assessed before motorhomes are allowed on site eg deep water, heights, disused buildings. Safety measures will need to be put in place to minimise the risk to site visitors, especially children. As motorhomes normally have gas tanks on board it is recommended that stopovers should, ideally, allow 4m between vehicles.
- **Water** – consider whether or not you wish to provide this and if the water is supplied by a private water supply there is a requirement to have it tested. Further information on water supply requirements can be found on the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland website or on the Dumfries and Galloway Council website.
- **Waste & Recycling** - The opportunity to dispose of waste and / or recyclables will be expected by many visitors. This would however be classed as business waste and our Council can provide you with further information. Contact our Waste Management Team on 030 33 33 3000.
- **Water Supply and Waste Water** – if your site will use existing public sewerage network please contact Scottish Water for advice on suitability and capacity in your area. The Campervan

and Motorhome Waste Disposal Guidance document jointly produced by Scottish Water, SEPA and Highland County Council provides comprehensive advice on this matter. www.nfus.org.uk/userfiles/imagesCampaigns/Access/021220CampervanWasteDisposalGuidance.pdf

Is planning permission required?

An exemption is currently in place until September 2022, which allows you to establish and operate a site for up to five motorhomes. The motorhomes can be parked on land you manage/ own without the need to first obtain planning permission. To be recognised as a 'Certified Location' you may wish to apply to one of the organisations listed below.

IMPORTANT NOTE: After September 2022, you will need planning permission if you wish to park more than five motorhomes on your site, even if you recently became a Certified Location/establish an Aires without Certified Location. If you need planning advice, please visit www.dumgal.gov.uk for further information.

Recognised national organisations authorised to 'certify locations' are:

1. Motorhome Fun

Application for certification can be found: www.motorhomefun.co.uk/support/motorhomefun-exemption/

2. Motor Caravanners' Club

Application for certification can be found: https://themotorcaravannersclub.co.uk/uploads/documents/ApplicationForms/CL-NS_Request.Application_2021_V3.pdf

To apply to operate a site for up to five motorhomes without certification by one of recognised national organisations you would need to contact the planning service, planning@dumgal.gov.uk for initial advice or submit an application to : www.eplanning.scot

The exemption for planning has been extended until September 2022 in part to recognise continuing challenges as a result of Covid-19 and also to allow time for aires sites to seek planning permission as this will be required to operate after September 2022.

The five-step process of application for an Aire is set out below:



What help is available?

Support is available throughout the process of establishing your Aire.

Whether you would like someone to come and talk about the opportunity it presents, how to do it, any challenges and potential grant funding opportunities please email SupportDG@dumgal.gov.uk or call on 030 33 33 3000 and an Officer from Dumfries and Galloway Council will be in touch or use our weblink [Visit Dumfries and Galloway - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](#).



Useful links:

- **Business Gateway** – They can provide free advice on aspects such as starting your business, growing your business, taking on staff & accessing finance. Tel: 01387 808638. www.bgateway.com
- **Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning** – More detailed advice, guidance and links regarding planning permission. Planning controls - [Planning controls - Dumfries and Galloway Council - www.dumgal.gov.uk](#)
- **Scottish Water** - Advice for customers on water supply and waste facilities. www.scottishwater.co.uk
- **Scottish Environment protection Agency (SEPA)** – guidance on waste and waste management. www.sepa.org.uk
- **Pitchup Facts & Figures** – Commercial booking website with a useful section containing statistics on the sector across the UK. www.pitchup.com
- **Campaign for Real Aires (CAMpRA)** – A group campaigning for greater provision of Aires. Their website includes lots of useful guidance and case studies for these stopovers. <https://campra.org.uk>
- **Park For The Night** an app accessed by motorhome users to find a lovely spot to park for the night. Advertise your aire with them. www.park4night.com
- **Scotland Starts Here** a useful website about all things border country from events to history. <https://scotlandstartshere.com>
- **RingGo** is a parking app for android and Apple phones: <http://m.myringo.co.uk>
- **Just Park** is a parking app for android and Apple phones: www.justpark.com