



How Your Local Economy Can Benefit From Motorcaravan Tourism

Definitions:

Motorcaravan - DVLA classification of campervans or motorhomes.

Aire - Term used to describe official overnight parking for self contained motorcaravan, with no camping behaviour allowed:

- **Basic Aire** - overnight stop for motorcaravan parking only - zero or little set up cost.
- **Dedicated Aire** – Separate area for motorcaravans with dedicated overnight bays - cost is signage and bay markings only. Sleeping allowed, but no camping behaviour.
- **Full Aire** - Area dedicated to motorcaravans with water, waste and rubbish disposal - costs dependant on location and facilities, can be a managed solution (advice from CAMpRA). Sleeping allowed, but no camping behaviour.
- **Waste Point** - water and waste emptying point. These can be situated where installation is low cost (eg. existing toilet blocks) and generate revenue to fund the toilets - units from £350+VAT.

Benefits of providing an Aire include:

- **Year-round revenue stream** – 82% of UK motorcaravan owners tour all year round, worth over £1bn pa to local towns and businesses. – *“Allowing motorhome overnight parking has assisted the night time economy of our area”*. Helen Townsend, Parking Manager, Craven District Council.
- **Attract European motorcaravan tourism** – worth around £5bn pa to local economies.
- **Minimal investment** – all that is required is a safe place to park.
- **Added security** – extra pairs of eyes watching. Decrease in incidents of antisocial behaviour – *“We have noticed that having campervans/motorhomes parked up on the various sites, actually helps with the security of them, in that we have had fewer visits by anyone looking to be rowdy or disturbing the normal peaceful nature of the sites.”* Northumbrian Water.
- **A small investment in a centralised waste point will prevent incidents of irresponsible disposal of waste.** 96% of UK motorcaravans are self contained. This means they are designed to be totally self-sufficient for 3-4 days so do not require a campsite.
- **Traffic Management** - by providing authorised overnight parking places for motorcaravans you can control where they park up for the night without costly enforcement measures, whilst embracing this rapidly growing tourism sector.
- **Tourism Management** - by providing facilities in less popular areas you will attract motorcaravans away from the tourist hotspots.
- **Help local businesses** – it’s not all about car parks; dedicated Aires can be included in regeneration plans and small five van sites can operate under the Exemption Certification scheme. Village halls, sports centres, garden centres etc can all benefit from operating as an Aire. *“Benefits have included additional income raised from the £7 per night, per vehicle, fee. Outlay is very small and there are no ongoing annual costs associated with having an aire attached to the hall’s grounds. It is minimal work for the return as there is no cleaning involved for the hall. Everything else already existed in terms of chemical treatment and water supply. Increased security and reduction in antisocial behaviour with motorcaravans onsite.”* Dave McGinity, Parish Councillor, Butley Village Hall, Suffolk.
- **Reduce Carbon Emissions** – Adding an Aire to an existing Park & Ride will assist councils to meet government pollution targets by reducing journeys by larger vehicles, providing a safe parking environment, and promoting year-round tourism. *“When we planned the site, we knew bays would need to be wider and longer, we added wider gaps between rows to allow for a greater turning circle when manoeuvring and ran water from nearby*

facilities to two standpipes and added a grey/black water waste plumbed into the sewer system. The fresh water supply and a grey waste dump are all included in the price. Occupancy rates vary by month, at the entrance to the site is a decent pub, and I'm always being told how grateful they are that so many motorhomers visit and stay for meals. I'm also told by our drivers that most of the motorhome guests that use the Park & Ride service visit local attractions.” Colin Perris, Parking Facilities Manager, Canterbury City Council.

Motorcaravan tourism is the fastest growing tourism sector in the UK. There are almost 400,000 registered UK motorcaravans, and travel restrictions due to Brexit and covid are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Why is a motorcaravan different from a caravan?

Motorcaravans have onboard tanks for fresh water and grey waste (from washing up and showering), and a toilet cassette. The majority also have solar power and batteries to power the electrical system. They do not therefore require the same facilities as caravans and tents (such as shower/toilet blocks, electric hook up) as provided by campsites.

Many campsites require forward bookings, and often have a minimum stay of 3-4 days. Whilst some motorcaravan owners are happy to book on to campsites, most prefer not to plan ahead, staying only 24-48 hours in a location before moving on.

See our short video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avo1xv42vaA&feature=emb_imp_woyt

It is a common misconception that providing Aires will take business away from campsites. We believe this is tantamount to saying that a B&B will take business from a 5-star hotel. They cater for completely different markets with different needs, yet they work together to bring a range of tourists to your town. The same applies to Aires and campsites.

Scottish campsites have been encouraged to extend their business by allowing access to their waste points (for a fee - the CAMpRA survey suggested £3-5 is an acceptable fee to pay to empty waste and top up with water. Cumbria County Council have recently installed bowsers in several car parks.

Then parking becomes easy.

- If a car park already allows overnight parking but 'no sleeping', then it's a simple change to the TRO (Traffic Regulation Order). CAMpRA recommend a maximum 48 hour stay.
- If it's a car park busy during the day but empty at night, then allow overnight stays between 6pm and 9am for a charge (survey indicates £5 per night with no facilities).
- If it's a little used car park or just an unused hardstanding area, then make it a dedicated motorcaravan overnight park.
- Height barriers can be an advantage for motorcaravan users as they give added security.

See our short video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YT1p9RROck8&feature=emb_imp_woyt

Durham and Gwynedd are the latest councils to recognise the benefits of this rapidly expanding year-round revenue stream. Gwynedd report states:

Generally, there is a perception in the UK that visits from motorhome users do not bring a great deal of economic benefit to a destination as they fill up with food from supermarkets etc. prior to travelling to the area. Although this may be true about some, evidence of recent research by the national group CAMpRA (Campaign for Real Aires UK), and in areas where travelling in motorhomes is popular, report tendencies that are a little different. Research in 2019 on motorhome visits to the highlands of Scotland (North Coast 500) shows that visitors in motor homes spent 33% of their holiday expenditure on accommodation with the remaining 67% on items such as food and drink, attractions and local shopping. Reports from local companies hiring motor homes also indicate that their vehicles were often returned without the oven and cooking equipment having been used and this suggests that these visitors often eat out in cafés, public houses, or local restaurants. Alun Fôn Williams, Tourism, Marketing and Events Service:

<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s31864/Appendix%201.pdf>

Example of Financial benefits to a town with an Aire €1.5m per year:

https://www.kilkennypeople.ie/news/border/728204/1-5million-boost-to-graignamanagh-thanks-to-campervan-visitors.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR2eiuJbZIs3VlhV8VOLYUn6NsR4gGQ9mTShX6-WQaWgwRqPJUPn9x1Q5o0