



What exactly is an Aire?

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Overview

This document explains what an Aire is, why they are needed, how they are used and what if any benefits there are from them being introduced.

What is an Aire?

An Aire is a safe parking space for a motorhome/campervan (**motorcaravan**) where the occupants are able to sleep, relax, prepare and eat food within the confines of the vehicle. No camping is permitted i.e., no tables and chairs placed outside the vehicle and time on site is limited. They are **not** campsites.

Originally conceived in France to entice touring motorhomes and campervans to villages and towns, their expenditure in shops and hospitality is a benefit to the local economy. Aires are popular throughout Europe, France having over 4000 of them.

Day-time parking and overnight stopovers in 'Aires' allow local hospitality and tourism businesses to benefit from motorcaravan tourism custom all year round, increase parking revenue, and allow busy campsites to concentrate on their traditional tents and caravans market.

Who Uses an Aire?

Motorcaravans which are self-contained, have their own onboard toilet/wash facilities, fresh and waste water onboard, are the primary users. Owners call the way that they use the Aires "touring".



Example of a self-contained motorcaravan

Where are Aires Located?

Aires tend to be located in close proximity to a tourist or commercial attraction. For example

- next to a cycle/walking track
- at a Park and Ride or in a city/town/village car park
- next to a monument
- beachside car park

The massive increase in the number of motorhomes and campervans during 2020 and 2021 saw nearly 400,000 registered 'motorcaravans' in the UK. This is due to their appeal as a safe and comfortable way to travel and stay in control of your own space. Covid has highlighted this. It is as if everyone who used to take coach and cruising holidays has bought motorhomes. Modern motorcaravans have all the mod-cons and latest technology on board to live very comfortably for months on end.

Some interesting facts that came out of the CAMpRA survey of September 2020,

- 89% of motorcaravans have on-board facilities including toilet and showers
- 82% tour all year round
- The average number of days away in vehicle is 63 per annum
- The average local spend is £47 per day
- Motorcaravans need to top up with water and empty waste tanks every 3-4 days

How are Aires Used?

Unlike campsites it is not normally possible to book a space at an Aire. They are run on a first come first served basis and there is no check in facility. Aires have a limited time for parking normally between 24 to 48 hours depending on the number of local attractions and number of motorhomes allowed to park in the Aire. If the Aire is full the motorcaravan will move to the next site they wish to visit.

Like other tourists motorcaravaners like to park (not 'camp' - no outdoor equipment) within walking distance of the shops and attractions they've come to see. They spend good money, and staying in town for a good night out in a bar or restaurant benefits the local community even more.

Motorcaravans are self-contained 'isolation pods' so when in touring mode behave differently to caravanners and tent campers who like to set up camp and stay a week or two in the same place, using their car to explore.

Motorcaravaners explore with only a loose plan, in a nomadic way, tasting the local cuisine and culture of the different regions. They will visit the attraction, perhaps enjoy a meal, do some shopping, rest/sleep, service the vehicle and then move on to the next location.

Some motorcaravaners use the Aires system to 'scout' locations and establish if they would like to return to the area and stay on a traditional campsite for a longer period. Some use Aires purely as a means of transiting through to a final destination.

Aires are used 365 days a year whereas the majority of campsites have a season which begins in Easter and ends after the Autumn break.

What do Aires Charge?

Parking Charges vary from free to £15 depending on the facilities on the Aire and the number of local attractions. Service Charges again can be either free, included in the parking cost or pay as you go at the service point (normally around the £3 to £5 mark).

Normally there are no staff required at an Aire as they run all by themselves. It is not unusual though for someone to come round early morning or at dusk to collect site fees or there may be ticket machines / card and barrier machine.

What are the Different Types of Aire?

There are several ways that Aires can be structured.

- Overnight parking and sleeping
- Overnight parking with water and waste points
- Service points only
- Small 5 van Aire
- Commercial Aire

Aires in Europe are created without the need for toilet blocks and showers as they are intended for use by self-contained motorcaravans.

Each one has its own requirements and is discussed further in the Designing Your Aire document however the first two are discussed in more detail below.

What Does a CAMpRA Aire Consist of?

CAMpRA define an Aire as follows:

“A parking area signed to indicate motorcaravan overnight parking is allowed - with or without services – and with no restriction on sleeping”

Such sites will be listed on the CAMpRA website as Aires with the following exceptions:

- A business allowing overnight stays with the expectation of you making a purchase is not an Aire. Providing a voucher or entry ticket is not classed as making a purchase as you have an option to use them.
- A site allowing tents, caravans, or any camping behaviour.
- A campsite with a separate overnight parking area for motorcaravans is classed as a campsite with an Aire.
- A site with a water supply and waste disposal point, but no overnight parking, is classed as a motorcaravan service point.

Overnight Parking Conditions for CAMpRA Aires

There are two types of Aires operating under CAMpRA.org.uk guidelines:

Motorcaravan Parking – overnight parking only

Motorcaravan Parking with Service Points

Site rules apply to both.

Motorcaravan Parking – Overnight Parking Only

1. Only motorcaravans with onboard facilities will be allowed to use the sites.
2. Overnight Parking Only – no camping behaviour allowed.
3. Sites can be booked (where applicable) but only 24 hours in advance.
4. Maximum stay of 48 hours, no return within 7 days.
5. Where possible, parking bays will be separated by a non-combustible boundary to maintain a minimum 3m spacing between motorcaravans.
6. Length restrictions may be applied; the site listing will show any restrictions.
7. Membership of an organisation will not be a prerequisite to use an Aire.
8. Signage showing the rules must be clearly displayed.
9. The signage should also display “Leave No Trace”.
10. Where there is a charge for use of the site, the collection will be the sole responsibility of the site owner.

Motorcaravan Parking with Service Points

1. If only drinking water is available, this will be classed as Overnight Parking Only.
2. If black waste disposal is available, this will be classed as a ‘Motorcaravan Service Point’.
3. The preferred method of grey waste disposal is a drive over drain.
4. If a drive over drain is not available, signage must indicate where to dispose of grey waste.
5. Where possible, sites should include rubbish bins and where possible, a recycling point.
6. If no rubbish disposal is available on site, signage should indicate if there is a disposal point nearby.

Do Aires Have Any Benefits?

Aires create all year round tourism and thus potential local income. They also have the following benefits.

- ✓ Cut down vandalism, car takeaway littering, fly tipping, clear up costs, security staff costs
- ✓ Discourages “wild-camping” in side streets, seafront hotspots - no upset residents
- ✓ Service Points mean less irresponsible behaviour when emptying waste tank and rubbish

Having an Aire at a business premises can increase security to sites that are sometimes remote. They have also been shown to deter antisocial behaviour.

Do Aires Create Revenue?

Yes is the simple answer, but it can be both direct through parking and service charges or indirect to the local economy.

Extra overnight parking revenue can be in the region of £5 - 10/night per motorcaravan, which if the site is unmanned, would be enough to cover parking area and a toilet block upkeep which most towns have.

A 20-Van Aire could generate in the region of £300,000 per annum for parking and with motorcaravaners' disposable income upwards of £250,000 could be spent in places such as pubs, shops, restaurants, and visitor attractions, the local economy benefits too.

These figures are based on the CAMpRA Motorcaravan Survey carried out in September 2020.

Did we mention that there are over 2million motorcaravan owners in Europe who mainly avoid visiting the UK due to lack of Aires? This is an enormous amount of untapped revenue.

What about the Van Life Community and off grid parking?

It is a well-known fact that there is a large community of people who now live and work from their motorcaravans, added to which there has also been a great off grid parking movement in the UK and throughout Europe. There are many who make a living through their YouTube channels touring around Europe on sites and many people who just like to park away from campsites and Aires. It may be for financial reasons but also, they just want to get right into nature.

Regardless of this we all need to service our motorcaravans at some point and it is far better this is done at places like Aires and Service Points to discourage bad habits.

Motorcaravaners regardless of their situation believe in the ethos of CAMpRA. There are, as in all walks of life, those who don't. CAMpRA believes in dealing with these issues in a positive and constructive way.

By creating Aires and Service Points throughout the UK and providing safe parking and acceptable disposal of waste - whether that be 'general household' or cassette toilet contents - CAMpRA believes we will have a positive and lasting effect on both the environment that we live in and the UK's long term tourism industry.

Appendix 1

Documents in this Series

All these documents can be found on the CAMpRA UK Ltd [Business Hub](#)

Name	Overview
Introduction to Aires	
Aires and Motorcaravans	This document explains what an Aire is, why they are needed, how they are used and what if any benefits there are from them being introduced.
Aires and Tourism	This is a guide to help you understand how Aires can work positively with other tourism sectors such as campsites, bed and breakfast and hotels.
Creating Aires and Service Points	
Steps to Creating an Aire	This document aims to set out the simplified steps for creating an Aire. This document is aimed at Small Businesses and Landowners who wish to create a small Aire.
Designing an Aire	This document aims to give practical advice and offer suggestion for the creation of successful parking spaces for Aires.
Providing a Service Point for Motorcaravans	Service points are very important for responsible and environmentally friendly disposal of waste this document outlines the types of systems used and potential costs for installation and upkeep.
Planning, TRO, Site Licenses and Certificates	This document outlines what may be involved in gaining Planning Permission/licences/certification to open an Aire along with changes that might be required to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) for existing car parking areas.
Fees and Promoting an Aire	This document aims to give practical advice and offer suggestions for what fees if any to charge for the use of an Aire and what methods can be used for promoting the new Aire.
Site Notices and Signs	This document suggests what notices and signs may be of use on an Aire.
CAMpRA Accreditation	This document explains what a CAMpRA Accredited Aire is, what this means to the site and how to get Accreditation.

Recommended Reading in Conjunction with this Document.

Name	Notes
CAMpRA - Strategy for Sustainable Motorcaravan Tourism in the UK	
Are you ready for the Post Lockdown tourist Boom?	
CAMpRA 2020 Survey	

Document History

Date	Version	Type	Notes
01/11/2021	2.0	Major Revision	Inclusion of following Docs Why Motorcaravans need Aires when Touring What is a CAMpRA Aire