



Aires and Tourism

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Overview

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.

Aires and Campsites - The Main Differences

The comparison between the two types of sites is based on operating with a 5-unit exemption certificate so what would be classed as a Certified Location or Certified Site by the two main clubs, however these comparisons are also relevant to larger campsites.

Campsites

Advantage of a Campsite:

- Open to caravans and motorcaravans.
- Can be grass.
- Can operate on sloping or uneven ground.
- Tend to book for longer stays as they are setting up camp.
- A full facility site can command a higher nightly fee.

Disadvantage of a Campsite:

- Cost of initial set up.
- Requires 6m spacing with provision for erecting awnings on each pitch.
- Pitches need to be mown regularly as they are used for external camping equipment.
- Policy required to manage the use of groundsheets to prevent damage to grass.
- Facilities are required to provide water, black waste and grey waste emptying, litter bin or recycling.
- A booking system will be required and decisions as to whether deposits are taken as sites are often booked months in advance.
- If you operate through one of the big clubs, you are generally restricted to members only a need to record membership details.
- Caravans often request electric hook up on sites, which are expensive to install and must be tested regularly.
- Caravans often request toilets and showers which incurs set up cost and increase cleaning and maintenance costs.
- Although stays tend to be longer the season is mainly 6 months, Easter to October.
- Due to booking a long time in advance there may be a high level of cancellations or no shows.
- As visitors are camping and gathering outside or in their awnings there will be some noise

Aires

Advantage of an Aire :

- Low or zero cost to set up.
- No requirement for electric hook up.
- Motorcaravans tour all year round.
- Due to the nomadic nature of touring motorcaravans there is no requirement to book in advance although for your own convenience you may ask for 24-hour notice.
- No requirement to operate a booking system.
- Aires are open to non-members so there is no requirement to maintain records or carry out membership checks.
- Can operate as an unmanned site.
- No deposit required.
- No cancellations or no shows.
- There is no requirement to add water or waste points although if provided this will provide more income as you will be able to charge higher site fees and will have the ability to attract passing trade.
- No requirement for litter bins but again would be beneficial.
- As these are for self-contained motorcaravans to park overnight there is no requirement for an area to set out for equipment or awnings.
- No toilets or showers as Aires are for self-contained motorcaravans only.
- Fewer issues with noise as Aires are not campsites so all activities take place within the vehicle unless as a private site you allow the use of camping chairs.

Disadvantage of an Aire :

- Needs to be reasonably level ground.
- Due to the weight of motorcaravans grass is not suitable if wet or soft, unless recycled plastic grids or other surfaces are used. Hard standings will allow year-round use.
- Self-contained motorcaravans only.
- Max stay 48 hours (this is normal but this is not a condition of the site licence).

Aires and Campsites in Harmony

Throughout Europe, Campsites and Aires coexist within close proximity to each other, often run by the same people, demonstrating that Aires (motorhome/campervan/ campingcar parking) are not a business threat to campsites. In fact, they can be a bonus to campsites, working seamlessly together.

A number of other European countries have similar facilities – known as Sostas in Italy, Areas in Spain and Wohnmobil-stellplatz in Germany – but generally known by all as Aires.

In the table below are 4 examples of successful Aires and Campsites working in partnership in the same location. There are over 2000 of these throughout Europe.

Country	Town	Link
Switzerland	Lake Geneva	Camping Vidy Campsite €50, Aire €20
France	Amboise	Municipal Campsite Camping Municipal De L'Ile D'Or - Eille D'Amboise Aire de Camping-car Camping-car Park d Amboise Campsite €30, Aire €12 Barrier operated Aire, pay by card on leaving. On island in middle of Loire right next to camp site. Site is seasonal but Aire open all year
Luxembourg	Echternach	Camping Martbusch Main campsite with a quick stop (2 nights max stay) next door Camping €30+ Aire €12-15
Germany	Waldshut-Tiengen	https://www.rheincamping.de/wohnmobil-stellplatz.html Aire and Campsite on the Rhein Campsite €33, Aire €15



Image courtesy of Rhein-Camping Waldshut – Red denotes Camping and Green the ‘Aire’

There is a growing number of existing campsites in the UK which have recognised the opportunity to expand their business and create additional income by building their own Aires next door to their sites. The table below lists some examples.

Country	Town	Link
United Kingdom	Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, England	https://www.searchforsites.co.uk/marker.php?id=43716 Jubilee Park Motorhome Aire open from November to March. Campsite adapting to all season touring
United Kingdom	Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, Wales	http://www.bluebell-park.com/Camping.html https://www.searchforsites.co.uk/marker.php?id=42810 Bluebell Park Aire next to existing campsite
United Kingdom	Welshpool, Powys, Wales	https://www.searchforsites.co.uk/marker.php?id=42809 The Mill Aire next to existing CL site
United Kingdom	Kingussie, Scotland	https://www.kingussiecamping.com/ Kingussie Camping and Motorhome Aire

What about Local Authorities and Competition with Other Business?

CAMpRA are frequently informed by councils and tourism bodies that overnight parking by motorcaravans in their carparks has been either prohibited, or prices have been increased, to avoid competition with established caravan parks or campsites but the above section shows how these sites can work in harmony with Aires and do so very well.

Basic overnight parking does not compete with caravan parks or campsites. It is a totally different market and business model catering for the needs of a different category of consumer. It is not comparable with a campsite or caravan park.

A touring self-contained motorcaravan that has full on-board facilities needs only a parking place, and access to water and waste services once every 3-4 days. The price of which should reflect the level of provision.

Another argument often used for refusal of an Aire is that motorcaravans will directly compete with Hotels and B&Bs. The majority of motorcaravaners don't use Hotels and B&B's. Purchasing a motorhome is a serious financial commitment and most owners will only ever holiday in their motorcaravan. Why would they use Hotels and B&B's when they already have their own personalised five star accommodation they can take wherever they wish to go.

Councils do not preclude the existence of B&Bs because they undermine 4-star hotels. Budget airlines are not banned because they compete with more up-market airlines.

All in all, motorcaravans enhance and increase the numbers of tourists in the area from which local businesses can receive income.

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	Overview
CAMpRA - Strategy for Sustainable Motorcaravan Tourism in the UK	

Document History

Date	Version	Type	Notes
29.10.2021	2.0	Major Revision	Inclusion of following Docs Campsite and Aires Working in Harmony – made internal only Local Authorities and Competition – made internal only
2020	1.0		Previous iterations