

Last year's increase in staycations highlighted a lack of facilities for camping, caravans and motorcaravans and uncovered a long term problem with the current UK network of campsites.

There are currently over 386,000 registered motorcaravans in the UK and over 2 million in Europe. Nearly 9000 owners responded to a recent survey and the results showed that the average amount spent locally when staying overnight is over £47 plus retail spending. If only 10% of UK owners stayed one night, over £1.1 million per day would be spent in local businesses and local economies.

So how can you attract motorcaravans to your town and benefit from this?

- Firstly we must understand that a motorcaravan only needs a place to park (ie, no chairs, tables bbqs etc) - if they want to set up camp they will use a campsite.
- They should be limited to 48 or 72 hours stays
- They need water and waste disposal points every few days
- Motorcaravans tour 365 days per year, not just "in the season".
- Such facilities are commonly known as "Aires" and there are several thousand of these throughout Europe but very few in the UK.
- For a local council provision of these is relatively easy and with minimum investment and they can be used to fund existing facilities and/or provide extra income.

Examples of Aires (overnight parking, with no camping behaviour)

1. Overnight parking and sleeping - This is the easiest provision for a council as they can use their existing powers or by a TRO to allow overnight parking for self contained motorcaravans only (no camping behaviour) in car parks or on any plot of level land. Preferably with specific allocated motorcaravan bays.
2. Overnight parking with water and waste points (these are required every 4 to 5 days) and will prevent any illegal emptying of waste. - These will require an initial investment which can be kept to a minimum if toilets already exist as it is simply an outside tap and toilet cassette emptying. Ideally a drive over drain (see example provided) for grey waste (washing up and shower water) could be provided and bins for rubbish.
3. Service points only - These can be installed where there is access for one vehicle but no parking. Good examples are public toilets as this is a great way of funding a public toilet (£3 to use only 10 vans per day £11,000 per year). Other examples are car wash, local garage, village hall, church or any local businesses that have water and sewage.
4. Full blown Aire - These require some initial investment or can be outsourced to a professional body who will install and manage these on your behalf. You retain ownership of the land and receive of percentage of the revenue from parking. These are secure areas with entrance barriers,

cctv, electric points and are accessed by a pre paid card (we are able to provide details of a company specialising in these).

5. Existing campsite - Aires do not take business away from campsites as most motorcaravan owners do use campsites if staying for more than a few days but campsites are often out of town, have grass pitches, are seasonal, require pre booking often months in advance, often require min stays and are increasingly FULL. But there is no reason they cannot learn from our European neighbours where campsite cater for motorcaravans by having non bookable overnight budget parking (no camping), access to service points (for a small charge) and of course when the main site closes these can continue to operate and provide additional income.

Other Benefits

- Allowing motorcaravans to park closer to towns and villages encourages spending in local businesses on average £47 per day.
- Allowing aires with water and waste points would reduce the illegal emptying of waste by irresponsible motorcaravan owners which is good for the environment.
- Small clubs struggling for funds could establish aires as an income stream using existing car parks.

The UK is crying out for a network like this especially now with an increase in staycations and rapid growth in sales.