



# All you need to know guide to starting a certified site



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



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# What is a Certificated Site?



Go Explore camping club has been granted exemptions by the Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish Government & Natural England (using the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Public Health Act 1936) which enables us to assist landowners and tenants in setting up and operating small campsites. We hold exemptions to cover all forms of camping without the need for planning permission. We aren't limited to just touring caravans or tents.

A Certificated Site, is typically a small, privately run campsite that can accommodate up to 5 caravans, motorhomes, glamping pods, shepherds huts or other similar accommodation and unlimited number of tents\*.

Certified Sites are for use by club members only, although the way Go Explore has been set up is that you may advertise wherever you like, and on arrival your guests are automatically considered members for the duration of their stay. There is no charge or additional cost to you or your guest for this. When they leave their membership ends, and starts again the next time they stay on a certified site.

Certificated Sites can be open all year round, or you can specify a camping season, such as March to October. You can also decide whether you require advanced booking, or whether you are happy for would be guests to simply turn up.

It's at your discretion what kind of site you wish to provide, whether it be a basic hideaway or a fully facilitated family-friendly set up. You can be tent-only, caravan-only, or accept all units... just as long as you meet the basic requirements the rest is up to you!

\*30 tents per acre, subject to minimum pitch size of 8m x 8m and a distance of 6m between tents for fire safety reasons.

# So what are the basic requirements?

In terms of your land, you'll need:

- ✓ Any size of fairly level 'campable' land. This could be a field you own, your garden, or even a driveway if it's suitable for overnight motorhome parking
- ✓ Safe access to and from your site. Normally this means an unrestricted view either side of your entrance point. If the approach road to the site is fairly narrow or single track, there should be enough passing places (big enough for a car towing a caravan to pull in) to ensure the safety of all road users.

In terms of facilities, you'll need: (minimum requirements)

- ✓ 1 x drinking water tap with a non return valve with clear signage or the ability for guests to purchase or be provided with bottled drinking water on site.
- ✓ Access to toilet facilities and handwashing facilities (Portaloo, Composting or Flushing).
- ✓ Public liability insurance - clearly stating the campsite is covered.

In terms of facilities, you may want to offer:

- ✓ A chemical disposal point (CDP) for emptying toilet cassettes into - a sealed tank, or connected to the main drain. Septic tanks are not permitted.
- ✓ 1 x rinsing water tap with a non-return valve (for rinsing out the toilet cassettes after emptying).
- ✓ Dry waste disposal - this can be something as simple as a dustbin that is emptied regularly, or you may wish to take this a step further by providing separate recycling bins.

# What are the benefits?

For an annual Certification Fee starting at £395.00\* we will provide you with:

- ✓ Annual site certificate permitting the 'change of use' on the land
- ✓ Entry into our online campsite directory – in which you can manage your own listing and keep it up to date
- ✓ Contact with our partners and others business in our field including [Pitchup.com](https://pitchup.com) who can offer a complete easy to manage booking service for your new venture
- ✓ Digital Club membership
- ✓ Annual site assessment visit from our Club Site Officers
- ✓ Ongoing access to specialist professional advisors
- ✓ Branded signage supplied by the Club

\* Fee is tiered based on the size of the proposed site



# What are the costs involved?

**Set-up Costs:** The costs you will incur (in addition to the annual certification fee) are those involved with setting up and maintaining the site. It's impossible to give an actual figure, as each site is different and the costs will depend on the facilities you wish to offer and on how much work you are able to do yourself. Go Explore can place you in contact with the relevant water board and electricity provider if that is something you need.

Individuals have been able to set up sites from as little as £500, however others have spent more than £30,000. The vast majority of people will be able to get underway for less than £3,000. If you consider that you could be operating your site for many years, the initial outlay is minimal – especially when considered against the alternative of seeking planning permission – again though Go Explore can provide advice and guidance on this as the application progresses.

You will be able to get a better idea of how much your set-up costs are likely to be once you've submitted your application and have been assessed by the club; they'll be able to advise what needs to be done to get the site ready for certification before any work actually starts. Remember, unlike other clubs we are able to offer virtual site visits to make the certification process much quicker, and easier.

**Maintenance Costs:** If your water is not mains supplied (well or spring water, for example) then you will need to have this tested on an annual basis. Likewise if you provide electric hook-up points, these will also need testing annually, together with details of a current public liability insurance certificate clearly stating the campsite is covered. You may be required to send copies of these documents to the Club - this can be done by email, post.

You will have to ensure that any Chemical Disposal Point is emptied, that bins are collected and that all of your other facilities are well maintained.

You are likely to have some regular duties, such as mowing the grass and the odd maintenance task that you may well be able to do yourself at little or no cost.



# What do I get out of it?

You get to keep all of the site fees that you generate, the club doesn't take any fee or percentage of this income, and if you keep a well maintained, attractive site and offer club members a positive and friendly experience you can build up a good customer base and build a lucrative business.

Being located in an area where there are lots of tourist attractions or being in a holiday hot-spot will help to attract your campers, but we also know lots of members who want to be tucked out of the way in a secluded, hideaway paradise, or even to experience a more wild camping experience.

You'll get to meet new people and make new friends, and you'll also get to be a part of the fastest growing camping and caravanning club in the UK.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I CHARGE?

The fees you charge for your site are entirely your choice. We can offer advice based on what surrounding sites of a similar nature are charging, but your fees should be determined by the popularity of the area, the standard of your site, the facilities you have and any local attractions or amenities that are near by. You'll be able to list all this information in our online directory and update it as things change.

We'd ask that you consider having a flat pitch fee (regardless of unit type) for caravans, motorhomes and tents, as some people have small caravans and some have huge tents! Remember that these kinds of details can be changed any time by logging in to the club website and updating your listing. We understand that where you have invested in differing units such as glamping pods the cost per night will be much higher. When starting out we'd suggest building a customer base by being cost effective and generating positive reviews first, and then increase your prices as you develop.

A typical cost for a pitch without electric hook-up (on a basic site) is approximately £12 per night and with electric is £17 per night. However, for a site with more facilities and attractions, the pitch fee can be considerably more.

# What makes a good site?

When considering setting up a Certificated Site, keep in mind your purpose for doing so. If venture is something you are embarking on for your social pleasure, then the type of site you provide might differ from someone who is setting a site up for more of a financial purpose.

As already mentioned, the type of site our members favour differs from very basic to fully-facilitated. You can assume that having a site with more than the basic facilities, such as toilets and electric hook-ups, will open you up to a wider audience and make your site more desirable; with this you may wish to charge slightly more in pitch fees. However, one thing that doesn't waiver is the standard of site you offer - members expect that the site should be kept clean, tidy and well maintained. The grass should be cut regularly, the site area kept free of any litter or debris and the welcome and service be friendly and positive.

The little extra touches will make your site look more professional and make a good impression on campers. For example, a notice board displaying information and contact numbers, such as the local doctor, vet, taxi company, nearest petrol station and supermarket this is helpful.





# I haven't bought the land yet, what would you suggest I look for?



Some people choose to start a campsite business and buy land specifically with the desire to become a Go Explore Certified Site. If this is you and haven't yet purchased the land then you'll need to consider the location and think about what the areas main attractions are. The location of a site plays an important role in determining the type of camper and their duration of stay.

You should make sure that the land meets the minimum requirements of the club and consider access to it. As mentioned in the 'Basic Requirements' section, if the approach route to the site is narrow, there should be enough passing places (big enough for a car towing a caravan to pull in) and avoid accesses on blind bends. If the access track is shared or private, then you will need to look into who owns the road and gain written consent from all parties, before we are able to issue a certification. If you don't own the land and are a tenant then a copy of your tenancy agreement specifically permitting camping or a separate written agreement from the landowner will be needed.

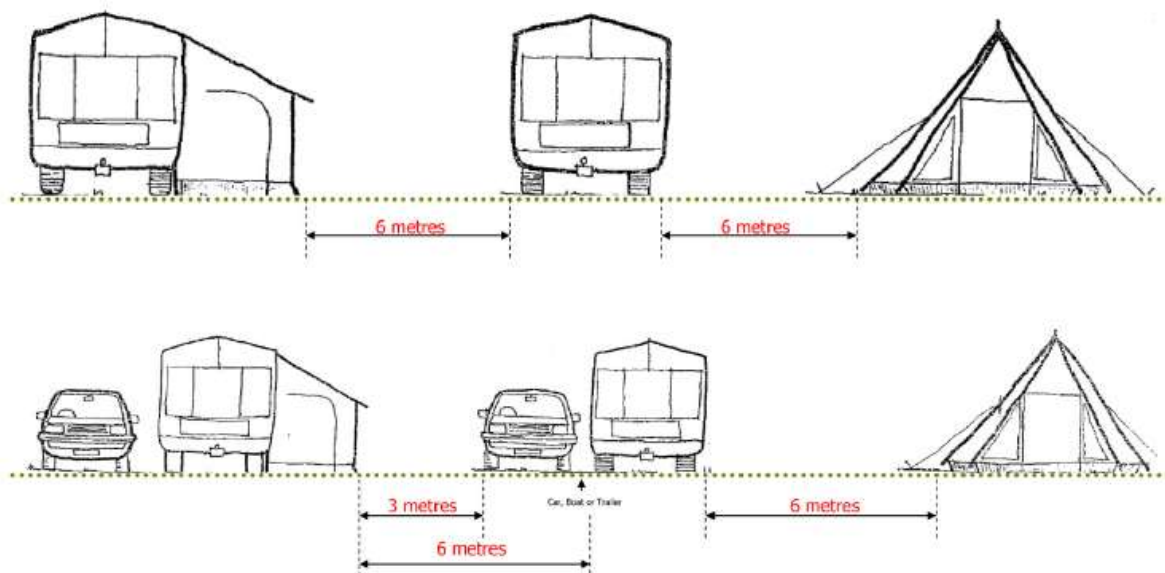
Please note we cannot guarantee that your application will be successful, but in most cases we are able to help, even where other clubs aren't.

# Any tips?

Well, first things first – if you aren't already a camper yourself then we highly recommend taking a trip as soon as possible! Borrow a tent or maybe hire a camper van and stay on a site for a few nights - use the facilities that are provided and think about what you like and dislike about the site; would you do anything differently? Talk to other campers staying there, you can learn useful information about what they seek in a site.

Showers are not requirement on a Certificated Site, all though many choose to offer them. If you do choose to provide them then keep them clean and consider how many you needs to stop guests having to queue. Also consider the needs of the less able or those with disabilities, when you think about water points, toilets, washing points and showers.

Your pitches don't have to be marked out, but it can be helpful. We suggest a minimum area of 8m x 8m. Per pitch. This will allow for a pitch accommodating a caravan with an awning. Regardless of pitch size, always ensure that there is a 6 metre gap between each unit, whether your pitches are marked or not – see the example below. This aids with privacy, offers the feeling of space, but most of all is considered a sensible approach to fir safety.





# What we give you

- ✓ What we give you is support and advice at any stage of your venture. So if you are just beginning to think about it, or whether you have been running for 30 years we can help. You'll have a direct phone number to our headquarters here in Aberystwyth, and a direct email address straight to our [Certified Site Department](#).
- ✓ When you do apply, we will take care of all the administration that goes into issuing a certified site certificate, and we'll do so in a quick and friendly way.
- ✓ We'll tell you exactly what we need from you, and give you time to provide it. It isn't anything too onerous and unlike other clubs we do as much as we can digitally and virtually.
- ✓ We give you an entrance sign, and your listing on our website will be featured near the top of search results for a few weeks to give you a boost.
- ✓ We'll make contact at least once a year to check how you are getting on and to offer advice and suggestions; we'll even come and stay a night or offer on-site advice if that is preferable.
- ✓ We'll update our website regularly with offers, discounts and deals that you may find useful to you and your guests.

All we ask is that you keep your site tidy and welcoming, and that you keep your listing up to date on our website by logging in to add photos and any new information you may need to.

# Let's get started

If you'd like to apply to set up a Certificated Site, we ask you to [complete the application form online](#). It's simple and straight forward with us only needing to collect some basic information. There's no obligation at any stage, so if you decide at any point that this is no longer the route for you, just let us know and we'll close your application.

If you still aren't sure, or if you have more questions and we help in any way, then don't hesitate to get in touch - we're a welcoming bunch!

Our office hours are Monday to Saturday 8.45am to 5.30pm, so drop us an email at [certifiedsite@goexplore.org.uk](mailto:certifiedsite@goexplore.org.uk)

We look forward to helping you very soon!

