The Future for Camping and Caravans?

Written by Jules Procter. June 2024

There are hundreds of thousands of caravans and campervans in the UK. Caravans, nearly always towed by diesel-fueled vehicles, and vans either diesel or petrol.
As at June 2024, there were extremely few electric cars capable for towing, or electric camper vans on the market.
The two major camping clubs have kept their heads firmly in the sand, ignoring the needs of the EV camper, with out-of-date rules and regulations.
So what is to be done, as we move to the electric age for transport?

1) Campsites

Very many campsites have a large amount of unused space, which could be used to generate electricity, and usable energy.
a) Caravan storage areas could have solar panel roofs. As would all the site buildings.
b) Kite systems, flying overnight, or in designated safe areas, could provide electricity.
c) Ground source, or air source, heat pumps could be installed to provide hot water for the toilet blocks.
d) Electric mowers, hedge-trimmers and caravan-moving tractors would support the staff in keeping the site tidy, and quiet. No more need for ear-protectors, or concerns about “white-finger” from the vibration of equipment.

2) New caravans and campervans

a) Design new caravan types, with four wheels, onboard traction battery system and motor, such that the caravan moves itself. The control system has a “follow me” capability to follow a designated vehicle, using it’s number plate, and doesn’t need to be physically attached to the vehicle.
(This would allow , say, a six-berth caravan, to be “towed” by a small car, such as a Renault Zoe EV.)
When legislation catches up, as far as autonomous vehicles are concerned, the caravan could make it own way to a campsite, and back to it’s storage place.
b) All-electric campervans are possible now, in micro-camper form, such as the Nissan ENV200. Other conversions, such as those based on the Maxus E-deliver9, are still expensive. The market will grow, but probably quite slowly, due to the limited number of suitable base vehicles.

3) Existing caravans

a) Tow the caravan using an all-electric dolly, with a tow-pack. A four-wheeled vehicle, about the size of an old Morris Minor, with the “follow me” system, as described above, and modular battery packs, to allow for variable load weight and range.
These could be hired, rather than owned. So owners of existing caravans could keep their prized possession. (Just replacing the use of gas, with an all-electric system for cooking, cooling and heating.)

4) Existing campervans/ motohomes

These are the rump, which will slowly fade away. Too expensive to scrap, to costly to convert to all-electric. Possible conversion to run off bio-fuel.

Summary

There is a large amount of love, and money, tied up in camping. Hopefully, this document shows a possible future scenario of how we may all continue to be able to camp.