**Virtual Permits – Frequently Asked Questions – Residents**

**What are virtual permits?**

Virtual parking permits are an electronic record confirming that you have a parking permit rather than having to display a physical parking permit. Details of your parking permit will be held electronically and shared with Civil Enforcement Officers patrolling permit areas.

**Why is the scheme changing?**

The current permit software we use is at the end of its lifespan and the system supplier no longer offers IT support for this system.

The move to virtual permits will provide a more efficient experience for residents. Some of the benefits will include –

* The facility to manage your parking permit online.
* There will no longer be a requirement to display a physical permit in your vehicle as we will hold an electronic record of your permits, in the same way that the DVLA hold records for vehicle tax.
* Payments will be handled by the permit system allowing the permit to be issued and active as soon as the payment is made.
* As the majority of permits will be virtual there will be less permits lost in the post or lost by residents or their visitors.
* As the permits will be virtual rather than physical there should be less Penalty Charge Notices issued to residents because they have forgotten to display or incorrectly displayed their physical parking permit.
* There will be more accurate enforcement of permit areas as it will be easier for Civil Enforcement Officers to identity vehicles parked without a valid permit or vehicles using a cancelled parking permit.

**When may the changes be implemented?**

It is hope that the changes will gradually be implemented throughout the 2022/2023 financial year.

**Are there any changes being made to the charges or limits per household for permits?**

No, the charges for permits remain the same as now and the capped limit for the number of resident and visitor permits per household remains the same.

**How will I apply for a new parking permit?**

Applications for new parking permits would be made online on the council’s website once the new system is introduced. In the meantime, applications for a paper permit can continue to be submitted either via the council’s website or via post.

**I don’t have access to the internet how can I apply?**

If you do not have internet access please call us on 0191 277 2728 (between 10.00am and 12.00 noon or 1.00pm to 3.00pm Monday to Friday) to request a paper application form for a permit.

In instances where the permit would be a visitor permit we would continue to issue a physical paper permit for those residents who do not have internet access or for those circumstances mean it is better for them to retain a paper permit.

**My permit is still current what should I do?**

Nothing, your permit will continue to remain valid for use up until the expiry date. Before your permit is due to expire we will write to you to advise that an application for a new virtual permit should be completed so that you can renew your parking exemption.

**Do I have to complete a new application form even if I have a current permit?**

Yes, as this is a new a separate system you will need to submit a new application for a new permit the first time you require a virtual parking permit.

**I have already supplied proof of residency and vehicle ownership in previous years, do I need to do it again?**

Yes, as this is a new a separate system you will need to submit a new application for a new permit the first time you require a virtual parking permit. Additionally, as it may have been up to 9 years since some residents provided documentation for their parking permit, it is important for residents to reapply in order to ensure that permits are only issued to those residents who are still eligible for a permit.

**I don't have any proof of residency/vehicle ownership, can I still apply?**

You may still apply for a parking permit provided that you have proof of residency at the permit address. Unfortunately, we are unable to process any applications for parking permits without proof of residency.

If you do not have proof of vehicle ownership for a residents parking permit, we can issue a temporary 56-day parking permit in order to provide you with additional time to provide the vehicle documents.

**How do I pay for my permit?**

Payment can be made online, over the telephone or via post by cheque or postal order.

**How long will it take to process my application?**

This is impossible to state as it will depend on workloads and staffing levels. However, it is envisaged that applications for parking permits will continue to be processed in less than the 14-day timescale we currently advise when applying.

**I need to change a registration on a permit how do I do this?**

Requests to change your vehicle registration can be submitted via your permit account on the council’s webpage.

**Will I receive a reminder that my permit is due to expire from the new permit system?**

Yes, you will continue to receive a reminder before expiry as you do now. Where we hold a record of your email address we will send the reminder notification via email. If we do not hold a record of your email address a letter will be posted to the permit address.

**If I don’t have a permit to display. How will the Civil Enforcement Officers know not to issue a Penalty Charge Notice to my vehicle?**

Details regarding your parking permit will be held on the Civil Enforcement Officers handheld electronic device and as such he/she will be able to check that you have a valid virtual parking permit. This simply replaces the check of the permit displayed on the vehicle dashboard.

**I am using a courtesy car what should I do?**

If you have a courtesy car because your usual vehicle has been involved in an accident or breakdown, please contact the parking permit team on 0191 277 2728 (between 10.00am and 12.00 noon or 1.00pm to 3.00pm Monday to Friday) for guidance and support.

**How does the virtual visitor permit work?**

When you have applied and been approved for a visitors parking permit you will be provided access to the permit via your online permit account.

When you have a visitor you would simply access your online account to enter the visitor’s vehicle registration. Civil Enforcement Officers will be able to identify that your visitor is entitled to park via their handheld electronic device.

You do not need to enter the duration of the visit, just the vehicle registration number for a visitor at your property during the times of permit parking restrictions. The Enforcement Officer will then know the vehicle has a parking exemption.

There is no charge each time the virtual visitor permit is used – the system remains in place where an annual charge is applied for the visitor permit, with no additional charges. This is the same system as for paper visitor permits.

**What happens when a Civil Enforcement Officer checks a vehicle during the times of permit scheme restriction that is not covered by either a virtual permit on his/her handheld unit or has a paper permit on display?**

The enforcement process remains the same that a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) would be issued to the vehicle via attachment to the vehicle windscreen. The PCN would continue to provide the usual information about options for appeal or payment of the PCN.

**I don’t know the vehicle registration of my visitor, what should I do?**

As soon as the visitor arrives, obtain the visitors vehicle registration number and enter it into your permit account.

**I still have scratch cards are these still valid to use?**

Yes, these will continue to valid for use.

**Can I still purchase scratch cards?**

Yes, scratch cards can still be purchased but in time will become a virtual parking permit. For those residents who have no access to the internet we will continue to issue physical scratch cards.

**I have more than one visitor coming to my house, what can I do?**

There is still a limit of 1 visitor permit per property. If you have visitors coming to your address at the same time while permit restrictions apply, you would need to apply for scratch cards or your visitor(s) may need to look for limited stay bays where a permit is not required.

If you have different visitors during the day at times when permit restrictions apply you would need to change the details for the vehicle registration number for each visitor to ensure the Enforcement Officer recognises the vehicle has a parking exemption.

**I can't remember my login details what should I do?**

If you forget your login details for the system you can access the system and use the “forgotten login/password” facility which will allow you access your account and reset your password.

**How far in advance do I have to book in a visitor permit?**

There is no set time period required to enter a vehicle registration in advance. However, it is understandably beneficial for your visitors if you are able to enter their registration prior to parking the vehicle.

**I have a visitor staying with me for a week, can I book this vehicle in for a week?**

Yes, when you enter the visitor’s vehicle registration into the permit system this registration will remain in place and valid to park until you replace it with another registration.