**Virtual Permits – Frequently Asked Questions – Business Permits**

**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 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 permit holders or their customers.
* As the permits will be virtual rather than physical there should be less Penalty Charge Notices issued to businesses because they have forgotten to display 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 be gradually be implemented throughout the 2022/2023 financial year.

**How do I apply for a permit?**

Applications for new parking permits can be made online on the council’s website once the new system is introduced. In the meantime applications for a physical permits 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 and 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 business permit we would continue to issue a physical permit for those businesses who do not have internet access.

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

Nothing, your permit will continue to remain valid for use. When your permit is due to expire we will write to you to advise that an application for a new virtual permit should be completed.

**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 business 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 businesses provided documentation for their parking permit, it is important for businesses to reapply in order to ensure that permits are only issued to those businesses who are still eligible for a permit.

**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 submitting an application.

**Will I receive a reminder that my permit is due to expire?**

Yes, you will continue to receive a reminder. Where we hold a record of your email address we will send the reminder letter 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.

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

When you have applied and been approved for a business parking permit you will be provided access to the permit via your online permit account. You can then access the permit via your account to advise which vehicle you wish to use the permit and you will have the facility to automatically amend the vehicle registration at any time via your account. The only exemption to this will be permits issued in residential permit areas where the business is using a low emission vehicle and wishes to obtain a discount on the price of the permit for doing so. In these instances, the permit will only be allowed to be used with the low emission vehicle. Civil Enforcement Officers will be able to identify that your vehicle is entitled to park via their handheld electronic device.

**I don’t know the vehicle registration of my customer 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 businesses who have no access to the internet we will continue to issue physical scratch cards.

**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.

**I can I book a vehicle in for a week with a virtual business permit?**

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