

OXFORD LOCALITY MEETING

21 April 2016

Changes to parking permits and closure of the parking shop

The Council's Civil Enforcement Team currently administers the parking permit scheme for the Oxford Controlled Parking Zones through the Parking Shop at Speedwell House. With the desire to deliver services digitally and reduce costs we propose to close the Parking Shop. A recent survey of users showed a majority expressing a preference to apply for permits online.

In order to accommodate the closure, we are separating the customer-facing part of the scheme (processing applications, issuing permits, taking payments, and answering queries) from the enforcement aspects of scheme, and incorporating it within the customer service centre. All other permits for Oxford's parking zones will continue to be issued by the Civil Enforcement Team. The parking shop will therefore close on 31 May 2016 and the new arrangements will begin on 1 June 2016.

Whilst the aim is for all services to be 'digital by default', it is important that we provide alternative ways to access the service. To ensure that those unable to apply online remain able to apply for and renew a permit, people will be able to apply or renew over the telephone, and either post their documents in for checking or going to a library to be assisted in scanning them. Customers will also be able to use library computers to apply and will be helped by staff or volunteers. This approach matches the application process for disabled parking badges, which are already online by default.

Although customers will mostly pay by card or cheque, we will provide alternative arrangements for payment in cash but we expect volumes to be low.

By making this change, we will improve the customer experience and realise savings by:

- Having routine administrative tasks carried out by a team of administrative staff, who also undertake similar tasks for schemes such as blue badges and school bus passes, and enables the customer to undertake additional transactions with the Council through one point of contact..
- Replacing individual processing of applications whilst a customer waits with batch processing in an office.
- Not having to keep a parking shop open six days a week for a total of 55 hours per week, allowing work to be conducted during office hours and for customers to make applications at a time convenient to them rather than being restricted to the opening hours of the parking shop.

Tasks requiring specialist knowledge, such as determining eligibility in more complex cases or ensuring the dataset is up to date after liaising with the civil enforcement team and other partners, would be handled by an appropriately-trained senior member of staff.

It is unlikely that these savings will result in reduced permit costs for customers as the savings achievable are relatively modest compared to the overall costs for administering and patrolling the controlled parking zones but this change may however help in increasing the interval for any future price increases required to cover costs.

We will inform customers of these changes through a variety of channels including within the permit renewal letter, on the councils website and social media accounts, posters in the parking shop and a press release.

Report by the Director for Environment & Economy

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