International Post Corporation

Royal Mail unveils postbox of the future to make sending parcels easier

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Royal Mail has unveiled a solar-powered postbox of the future as the company continues to find ways to make sending parcels easier.

The iconic postbox design has been given a modern makeover including an extra-large opening to accept parcels larger than those that fit through a letterbox for the first time. Customers scan their parcel's barcode and a drawer opens for them to drop it in, and they can also request proof of posting using the Royal Mail app.

Royal Mail has recently updated its app so customers can post small, barcoded parcels in a postbox and request proof of posting. The app update utilises 4G and the phone's location services, and to use it customers simply tap 'services' on the home screen, go to 'proof of posting', and then follow the steps.

The move is part of Royal Mail's drive to make it easier for customers to use postboxes to send parcels. There are 115,000 postboxes in the UK, located within half a mile of 98 per cent of addresses, making them the UK's largest parcel drop off network. They currently accept parcels that are small enough to fit through a letterbox, but thousands could be adapted to the new design to accept larger parcels.

Five of the new postboxes are being piloted in the Ware, Hertford and Fowlmere areas before Royal Mail rolls them out further across the UK. Letters can still be posted in the usual way through a separate opening.

The new postboxes will support the increasing numbers of people selling unwanted clothing and other items on secondhand marketplaces, as well as traditional online shoppers sending returns.

The updates to postboxes are part of Royal Mail's wider efforts to make sending and receiving parcels as convenient as possible. Royal Mail now has more than 21,000 locations where customers can drop off and collect parcels, including 1,000 lockers, 7,000 Collect+ stores, 11,500 Post Office branches, 1,200 Royal Mail Customer Service Points and 1,200 parcel postboxes.

Emma Gilthorpe, CEO at Royal Mail, said: "In making this historic change to our postboxes,

our goal is to maximise choice and convenience for our customers. In an era where letter volumes continue to decline and parcels are booming, we are giving our iconic postboxes a new lease of life on street corners across the nation.

"You can now drop your parcel in any postbox where it fits - you just need a label with a barcode."

Source: International Distribution Services

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