

Using Online & Digital Postal Services

Mendlesham Computer Club

By Giles Godart-Brown

Why use Royal Mail online?

- It is convenient, especially if you don't live near a post office that's open.
- It is nearly always cheaper for packages and international, for example;
 - Medium parcel up to 2kg: £6.15 online vs. £7.45 at the Post Office.
 - Special Delivery Guaranteed by 1pm, up to 100g: £8.75 online vs. £9.25 at the Post Office.

Preparing your item for posting

Once packaged up:

- Use a letterbox scale and tape measure to measure the size.



- Use digital cooking scales for the weight.



- For parcels, follow the instructions of your chosen service as they may have different criteria for small parcels etc.

Sending Packages from Home

- Chose a carrier that fits your requirements, not all carriers ship internationally. [Parcels2Go](#) is a useful comparison site.
- Popular carriers are:
 - Post Office/Royal Mail
 - Evri
 - Yodel
 - InPost
 - DPD
- These services will allow you to:
 - Print your own labels at home and attach to the parcel
 - Schedule a parcel collection from your doorstep
 - Leave it at a drop off point or collection locker

Introducing the Royal Mail App

- The safe and official App from the Royal Mail is available on the Apple App Store , Google Play Store or from the Royal Mail website
- It helps you:
 - Find the nearest branch
 - Check opening times
 - Compare postage prices within its own services
 - Buy postage
 - Track parcels
 - Check on post box collection times
 - Check for fraudulent stamps

Sending and Tracking a parcel with the Royal Mail App

- Buy and print the label at home and attach it to the parcel
- If you take it to a traditional post box
 - use the App to scan the code on the label
 - drop the parcel in the post box
- Once it has been scanned by the Royal Mail, you can follow the parcel in the App as it moves through the system.

Sending and Tracking a parcel via a Smart Post Box



Royal Mail is rolling out about 3,500 solar-powered “postboxes of the future” that accept parcels as large as a shoebox.

They have a digitally controlled “drop-down drawer” for parcels (in addition to a regular letter slot).

They work in conjunction with the Royal Mail app.

How to post items using the new digital postbox system

Step 1 - prepare your item

- Pack the item securely. Use suitable packaging (box or padded envelope depending on size/weight).
- Weigh & measure it to make sure it fits within the posting slot/drawer and meets the service you intend to use (standard, tracked, etc.).
- Apply the correct label: If you are using a service like Click & Drop or printing your own label online, make sure the QR and barcode are visible and aren't creased.
- Choose appropriate service: If you want tracking or proof of posting, pick a service that supports it. For the new postboxes, proof of posting is supported via the app.

How to post items using the new digital postbox system

Step 2 - Locate a compatible postbox

- Find a Royal Mail postbox where one of the new smart/solar-powered units is installed.
- Note: For smaller items, the standard red postboxes may be suitable if your parcel fits and you don't require the drawer/barcode scan feature.

How to post items using the new digital postbox system

Step 3 - Use the app & drop your parcel

- Open the Royal Mail app on your smartphone. In the menu select “Proof of Posting” or equivalent service.
- The app uses your location (GPS) to identify which postbox you are at. Then you scan the barcode on your parcel.
- Once validated, the drawer mechanism of the postbox opens for you to drop the parcel in. (Or, for standard items, drop into the slot if no drawer is needed.)
- The app will confirm the posting and provide proof of posting as a digital receipt.

Step 4 - After dropping off

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Hints & Tips

- Check size/fit: Just because a postbox is “smart” doesn’t guarantee every parcel will fit. If your item is very large/heavy, better to go direct to a Post Office or courier.
- Label clearly: Ensure the label is properly attached, barcode readable, destination clear.
- Proof of posting is useful: This digital route gives you it, but if you skip the scan/ app step, you may drop it without proof.
- Check which services are eligible: For example, international or heavy items may have extra requirements. The app now supports proof of posting for international tracked/signed services.
- Timing: Make sure your item gets dropped before the last collection time for that postbox if you want same-day onward movement. Collection time may be printed on the box.
- Keep receipt/label copy: Always keep a copy of your posted label/barcode in case there’s a query or loss.
- Check destination/import rules (if sending abroad): Same as any mail, check customs, prohibited items, correct service for destination. A Customs Declaration will be asked for when buying international postage.
- If uncertain: If your item is expensive, fragile or very large, it might be safer to use a staffed counter or courier rather than relying purely on an unmanned postbox.

Last Posting Dates for Christmas

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Last posting dates - Overseas

- December 2nd for some European countries
- December 10th for the USA.
- December 5th for “International standard” to Australia

NOTE: Sending items to Canada

- Resumption of services: Royal Mail began accepting mail to Canada again around October 15, 2025, following the partial resumption of Canada Post operations.
 - Continued delays: Expect significant delays. Packages are still being processed, but there is a large backlog from the strike period.
 - Rotating strikes: Canada Post is still conducting rotating strikes, which means service interruptions may still occur.
 - Look for alternative delivery services that are not affected by the strike

Last posting dates - UK mainland

Date	Class
Wednesday 17th December	2nd Class 2nd Class Signed For
Friday 19th December	Royal Mail tracked 48
Saturday 20th December	1st Class 1st Class signed for
Sunday 21st December	Royal Mail Tracked 24
Tuesday 23rd December	Special Delivery Guaranteed

Lockers

to receive or return packages

Lockers

- If you are expecting a parcel and aren't likely to be in, it may be useful to use a locker, the two nearest are;
 - Amazon at Stowmarket Station
 - inPost at Brockford Garage
- Amazon will also deliver to a Post Office Counter
- They work by emailing you a code which you enter on the machine and the appropriate door opens.

