

Every spring, thousands of runners and supporters converge on the streets of Greater Manchester for one of the region's marquee mass-participation events: the **Manchester Marathon**. For locals and visitors alike, knowing about **Trafford road closures**, **South Manchester closures**, and **Oxford Road closures Saturday** is essential for planning race day travel, spectating, and even local business operations. In this detailed guide, we'll cover everything you need to know about the scale and timing of closures, race logistics, the entry process including charity places, and some FAQs on the official course route and elevation.

Race Date, Scale, and Time Limit

The *2026 Manchester Marathon* is scheduled for **Sunday, 12th April 2026**. It's one of the biggest road races in the UK outside London, regularly attracting over 30,000 runners ranging from elite athletes chasing fast times to everyday runners striving for a personal best or a memorable race experience.

Time limit: The race has a strict cut-off time of **6 hours**. This means runners must complete the full 26.2 miles within this period. Roads used for the marathon typically begin closing early in the morning and only reopen as runners pass or the race concludes. For locals and transport users, understanding the exact timing of closures is vital to avoid disruption.

Entry Process and Sell-Out Reality

The Manchester Marathon is highly sought after, and places often **sell out within days** of registration opening. Registration for the 2026 event opens online in late autumn 2025, with prices starting at around *£55 early-bird entry fees*. However, many runners find it difficult to secure ballot entry due to the quick sell-out speed.

Charity Places and Real Costs

Those missing out on the ballot can enter via **official charity places**. While they offer guaranteed entry, keep in mind the associated costs below:

Charity	Registration Fee	Minimum Sponsorship	Total Minimum Cost
MS Trust	£40	£500	£540
Other Charities (average)	£30-£50	£200-£400	£230-£450

Using the *MS Trust charity place* as an example, runners pay a **£40 registration fee** plus commit to raising at least **£500 in sponsorship**. This is a worthwhile [manchester piccadilly to metrolink](#) option for runners passionate about a cause but be prepared for the fundraising commitment.

Course Route, Elevation, and Certification History

The official marathon course has long been celebrated for its flat, fast potential, making **Manchester a popular choice among PB-chasers**. Here are the main features:

- **Starting point:** Platt Fields Park, South Manchester.
- **Key areas passed:** Rusholme, Fallowfield, Didsbury, Sale, and Trafford before finishing near the city centre's Albert Square.
- **Elevation:** The route is largely flat with undulating sections but no significant climbs, keeping total elevation gain under 100m throughout.
- **Course certification:** The race is officially certified by UK Athletics (AIMS measurement and IAAF standards), ensuring its distance accuracy for record and qualification purposes.

For 2026, a newly updated course GPX file is available to runners and spectators looking to preview the route on mapping devices like Garmin watches. Third-party site GoAndRace.com hosts a downloadable GPX for Manchester Marathon 2026, which can be uploaded directly to Garmin and similar devices. This is invaluable for planning race pacing, spectating spots, or transport routes on race day.



Key Road Closures: Trafford, South Manchester, Oxford Road Saturday

The Manchester Marathon road closures are extensive due to the race route covering multiple boroughs and arterial roads. Below is a summary of primary closure zones:

Trafford Road Closures

- **Sale area:** Several roads near Sale town centre, including parts of Washway Road and Dane Road, close from early race morning (around 7:00 AM) lasting until approximately 2:30 PM.
- **Stretford:** A56 Chester Road is fully closed in both directions for several hours during the race to facilitate safe runner passage.
- **Trafford Centre Access:** Expect indirect routes or temporary diversions; road users advised to check local authority updates early.

South Manchester Closures

- Beginning in Platt Fields, the area sees closures on Wilmslow Road and Wilbraham Road, both key distributor roads for transport in South Manchester.
- Fallowfield and Didsbury see intermittent road closures mainly along Wilmslow Road with some side streets blocked to maintain safety and runner flow.
- Closures begin early morning, around 6:30–7 AM, with phases reopening after the last runners pass, usually by early afternoon.

Oxford Road Closures Saturday Pre-Race

Oxford Road, a vital artery into Manchester city centre, faces planned closures **on the Saturday before race day** for race logistics such as final preps, race village setup, and pack collection.

- **Closure window:** Generally from 8:00 AM on Saturday until the evening (~8:00 PM).
- **Sections affected:** Oxford Road between Whitworth Street and Wilmslow Road.
- **Advice:** Anyone attending *packet collection* should arrive via public transport or park well outside the closed area. Manchester Oxford Road station is the best rail stop to minimise walking.

How to Plan Around the Closures

Local residents, businesses, and race spectators should consider the following tips:

1. **Use public transport:** Man Metrolink trams and train services will adjust for race day. Oxford Road Station and Deansgate Station are principal rail hubs that save walking distance onto the course and race village.
2. **Check official closure PDFs:** Manchester City Council usually publishes detailed road closure schedules and maps at least 4-6 weeks before the event.
3. **Time your arrival:** Avoid vague advice like "arrive early"—aim to reach the start vicinity by 8:30 AM at the latest, or spectator spots ideally before 9:30 AM.
4. **Prepare your race kit:** Keep essential items like your race number, timing chip, and warm clothes accessible. A simple race-week kit list stored in your phone notes can help reduce last-minute panic.

Conclusion

The Manchester Marathon is a well-loved fixture on the UK road racing calendar, but its extensive course and large field mean **road closures are widespread and impactful**. From **Trafford road closures** through **South Manchester** to **Oxford Road closures on the preceding Saturday**, being informed well in advance will make race day smoother for runners, spectators, and locals alike.

Remember that official race data, including course KPIs and elevation details, and the official 2026 GPX route download, can be uploaded to devices like *Garmin* watches to help you mentally map and pace the course.



Interested in running? Don't delay registering when entries open — and if opting for a charity place like the MS Trust, factor in their realistic costs before committing. With preparation and knowledge, Manchester Marathon 2026 can be your rewarding race day experience, free from confusion or last-minute surprises on the roads.