

Each October, the streets of Greater Manchester come alive with the rhythmic pounding of thousands of marathon runners pushing through 26.2 miles of challenging terrain. The **Manchester Marathon** has grown into one of the UK's favourite autumn events, with local communities like **Altrincham** playing a vital role in supporting runners and creating an electric atmosphere for spectators. If you're wondering exactly where to position yourself in Altrincham to catch the race action — and what makes this part of the route truly special — you've come to the right place.

Manchester Marathon Race Date, Scale, and Time Limit

The next Manchester Marathon is scheduled for **Sunday, 6 October 2024**, with an expected field of over 10,000 runners. The event starts early morning, typically around 9:00am, and has an official **time limit of 6 hours 30 minutes** for all participants to complete the course. After this cutoff, roads begin to reopen for normal traffic, and the race services wind down.

This scale — a mid-sized but well-managed event — strikes a good balance between a lively, festive atmosphere and a safe, well-supported race experience. For spectators, it means the course remains vibrant from start to finish, with plenty of community groups lining the pavement and various hotspots for watching and cheering.

Entry Process and The Sell-Out Reality

Getting a race slot for Manchester Marathon is increasingly competitive. The general public entry usually opens in February, and places are known to sell out within days. If you're aiming to run, it is essential to register early. Online entry fees for 2024 were approximately £45, reflecting the comprehensive event services and medal inclusions.

However, there are alternative entry routes aside from the standard ballot:



- **Charity Places:** Many runners enter by fundraising for official charities affiliated with the marathon.
- **Club Entries and Transfers:** Registered running clubs might secure block entries; occasionally, runners can transfer their entries if permitted.

Charity Places and the Real Costs

One notable charity partner is the **Manchester MS Trust**. If you wish to run for such a charity, the typical package involves a £40 registration fee plus a minimum sponsorship target of £500. While the fundraising commitment sounds daunting, runners often find this route gives added motivation and a deep sense of contribution.

Entry Type Fee Minimum Sponsorship Notes General Entry £45 approx. N/A Entries sell out quickly. Charity Entry (e.g., MS Trust) £40 £500 min. Fundraising commitment.

Altrincham Course Section: The Route, Elevation, and Certification

The course route is a defining feature of Manchester Marathon's identity. Starting near the city centre, the route heads out west toward Sale and Altrincham before looping back on itself and tracking a mostly flat, albeit varied terrain.



Where is Altrincham on the Course?

Altrincham lies near the halfway mark, typically between miles 12 and 14, making it a key section called the *altrincham course section* by local commentators. This is precisely where runners transition from the outbound leg into the turning point for the return leg back towards the city centre. Importantly:

- The Altrincham section has modest elevation changes, comprising gentle undulations rather than harsh hills.
- The route is officially **certified and measured to UK Athletics standards**, ensuring legitimate marathon distances for competitive and qualifying purposes.

Elevation Details

Overall, the elevation profile in Altrincham reads as a runner-friendly stretch with a net descent in spots, rewarding efficient pacing before the final city centre push. While some profiles exist on third-party platforms, precise route data can be downloaded as a GPX file for devices like Garmin watches — ideal for runners and spectators who want to plot viewing spots.

For example, goandrace.com provides a reliable GPX download of the upcoming 2026 route, which can be loaded directly into your Garmin device or equivalent to track or virtually simulate the race path — a handy tool if you

plan to spectate and want to see where the course goes through Altrincham.

Best Viewing Spots in Altrincham: Community Crowds and Outbound/Return Viewing

For spectators, the *altrincham course section* offers two optimal vantage points:

1. **Outbound Leg (Mile 12-13):** Early to mid-race, runners appear fresh and energetic, creating a thrilling, high-spirited environment. Located near Altrincham tram stop, this spot is easily accessible by public transport and allows you to watch runners approach from the city towards the town.
2. **Return Leg (Mile 15-16):** After the turnaround, runners come back in the opposite direction, tired but determined. Watching the same runners pass again in the other direction within a close timeframe doubles the excitement and cheering impact.

These spots are often flanked by local community groups, bands, and enthusiastic crowds — a true slice of northern marathon spirit. If you time your visit well, you can enjoy runners at both stages and get a feel for the intense camaraderie and support that fills Altrincham's streets on race day.

Transport and Access Considerations

Altrincham is served by the **Altrincham Tram Stop** on the Metrolink system, which is your best bet for quick access to the race corridor. From Manchester city centre, trams frequently connect you to Altrincham in under 40 minutes, making it easy for spectators to arrive and depart without hassle. Do note, roads near the route will periodically close for race safety during the event period (starting from early morning), so public transport is strongly recommended over driving and parking.

Final Notes: Preparing Your Race Day Viewing Kit

As a marathon reporter and weekend runner who has covered dozens of events, I always carry a small "race-week kit" tailored for spectating in varied conditions. Here's what you might want to bring with you when watching in Altrincham:

- Portable weather-appropriate clothing (waterproofs or sunhat)
- Binoculars for spotting runners farther out
- A charged phone (for live tracking apps and photos)
- Race information printouts or apps with route maps loaded (GPX files can help here)
- Snacks and water — access to refreshments can be patchy during the race
- A foldable chair if you plan to stay for a long stretch

Remember, vague advice like "arrive early" won't cut it — aim to reach Altrincham before 10:00am to catch the outbound runners and [the5krunner](#) secure good viewing spots, especially if you want to see the return leg as well.

Summary

Watching the Manchester Marathon in Altrincham is an exciting experience amplified by the vibrant community support and strategic location on the course. Whether tracking runners on the *altrincham course section* outbound or cheering them on their return journey, the town offers exceptional vantage points bolstered by easy public transport access via the Altrincham Tram Stop.

For runners, understanding entry logistics — such as charity places with commitments like the MS Trust's £40 registration plus £500 minimum sponsorship — provides important context about the event's scale and funding. And for spectators who want to plan the perfect viewing day, exploring certified route maps and GPX files through resources like [GoAndRace.com](https://goandrace.com) and loading them on Garmin devices ensures you won't miss a moment of the action.

If you're a local or visiting fan, set your alarms early on race day, hop on the tram to Altrincham, and get ready to experience one of the north's most community-packed marathon viewing spots.