

If you've recently visited the official Manchester Marathon website or materials, you may have noticed something that's causing a bit of confusion: the course map still shows the 2026 route, with no clear mention or visual update for the 2027 race. For keen runners, volunteers, and supporters eager to plan, this raises important questions around what to expect regarding the race date, course changes, entry, and more.



In this blog post, I'll unpack why the official route map still shows 2026 for the Manchester Marathon, what we know (and don't know) about the 2027 route, and some practical tips around entries, charities, and tools for checking course details. I've also included a quick price example to illustrate the real cost of running for charity. If you want to keep up the5krunner.com to date on the latest, make sure you **check for updates** regularly.

Race Date, Scale, and Time Limit

The Manchester Marathon typically takes place in early April. For 2027, the race date is expected to fall on a similar weekend, but the official date announcement is still pending. Historically, the organisers are very punctual with their announcements, usually releasing race information in the preceding autumn.

Regarding the scale, the Manchester Marathon remains one of the UK's largest single-day marathons after London, regularly hosting around 30,000 runners across the main race and accompanying events like the 10k. Organisers maintain a cap on entries to ensure smooth logistics and minimise impact on the city.

Time limits are another crucial consideration. The marathon has traditionally enforced a cut-off of 6 hours and 30 minutes, which typically accommodates most runners and walkers. Those aiming for guaranteed finish times should factor this into their race planning.

Entry Process and Sell-Out Reality

Entries for Manchester Marathon typically open several months before race day—usually in autumn of the preceding year. However, the race sells out incredibly quickly due to its popularity and reputation for being a flat, fast, and well-organised course.

One common frustration among hopeful participants is the **lack of detailed guidance on sell-out speed**. Announcements may simply advise to “arrive early” without specifying how fast places typically go, which can be frustrating for those new to the race.

Furthermore, many runners secure spots via charity places or partner organisations, which leads us to the next important topic.

Charity Places and Real Costs: The MS Trust Example

Running for charity is an excellent way to secure a place once the public ballot fills up. However, it’s important to understand the associated financial commitments.

For example, the *MS Trust*, one of the race’s partner charities, requires a **£40 registration fee** directly to the charity, plus a **minimum sponsorship target of £500**. These funds support the charity’s work but mean runners must consider the real cost of entering via charity places.



Here’s a quick breakdown:

Cost Element	Amount (£)	Charity Registration Fee	40	Minimum Sponsorship Target	500	Total Minimum Commitment	540
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Be sure to visit your chosen charity’s official website for up-to-date requirements. Remember that all sponsorship money must be raised independently—organisers cannot guarantee entry refunds if you miss targets.

Course Route, Elevation, and Certification History

Now we get to the heart of the question: why does the official route map still show the 2026 Manchester Marathon route?

Firstly, the official 2027 route has not yet been confirmed or published. The organisers tend to finalise the route a few months before race day, taking into account council road-closure permissions, crowd management, and other logistics. Changes between years are often minor but important to note for pacing and preparation.

Regarding the **route itself**, the Manchester Marathon is known for its largely flat course that loops around the city and suburbs. The total elevation gain is generally under 100 metres, making it a popular choice for PB chasers.

The course is officially certified by UK Athletics and measured to the stringent specifications set by World Athletics for point-to-point and looped courses. Certification ensures the marathon distance is accurate and that any results can be used to qualify for other events or records.

It's also worth noting that third-party websites such as [goandrace.com](https://www.goandrace.com) offer downloadable GPX files representing the 2026 route. While handy, these are unofficial and should be viewed as approximate guides rather than definitive routes. For example, you might load the GPX file onto Garmin devices or use smartphone apps during training, but always cross-reference with official updates once available.

Why the Delay in Updating the Official Route Map?

Several reasons contribute to why the official 2027 Manchester Marathon route map isn't live yet:

- **City council permissions:** Close coordination with local authorities is necessary to secure road closures and safety provisions.
- **Feedback incorporation:** Organisers often collect post-race feedback and may tweak the route to improve logistics or runner experience.
- **Infrastructure changes:** Roadworks or city developments can necessitate minor changes to the starting area or certain sections of the course.
- **Precautionary messaging:** Publishing an outdated or tentative map prematurely could cause confusion. It's safer to wait until everything is confirmed.

Therefore, while the “**map still shows 2026 route**” message is frustrating to some, it reflects a cautious and responsible approach to ensuring accurate information is provided.

How to Stay Updated

If you're planning to run or support the Manchester Marathon in 2027, here are my top tips to stay on the ball:

1. **Bookmark and regularly check the official race website.** Updates on race date, route, and entries are posted there first.
2. **Follow the Manchester Marathon social media accounts,** as announcements and live updates often break there.
3. **Use reliable third-party tools like [goandrace.com](https://www.goandrace.com)** to preview estimated courses, but always cross-check.
4. **Load available GPX files onto Garmin or similar devices** for route familiarisation during training — example for 2026 is widely downloadable but wait for updates for 2027.
5. **Sign up to newsletters** from the race organisers and partner charities to receive direct communication.

Summary

The persistent display of the 2026 route on official Manchester Marathon platforms boils down to a careful, measured approach by organisers awaiting final approvals and confirmations for 2027. The race date is expected around early April as usual with standard time limits applied to accommodate runners and walkers. Entry sells out fast via public ballot, but charity places such as through the MS Trust come with financial commitments (e.g. £40 registration + £500 minimum sponsorship).

As a runner or supporter, you should treat unofficial GPX downloads from sites like [goandrace.com](https://www.goandrace.com) as approximate guides, and continue to **check for updates** on the official channels for 2027 route confirmation. This prudence

ensures your marathon planning is based on accurate and up-to-date information.

With proper preparation and clear understanding of your entry options and course layout, Manchester Marathon remains one of the UK's finest big-city running experiences.

Keep your race-week kit checklist handy and bookmark this page. I'll update if and when the 2027 route map goes live!