

Countryside on your doorstep



Cathays Park

**(Including Alexandra Gardens,
Friary Gardens and Gorsedd Gardens)**

**This page helps you find out more about the
Cathays Park open spaces.**

Useful information is set out under the following headings:

- Summary
- Features of interest
- Facilities
- Access
- Nearby
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- Information and Contacts

Summary

Cathays Park consists of the three garden areas: Alexandra Gardens, Gorsedd Gardens and Friary Gardens. These are high quality formal parks forming green spaces between a number of impressive buildings. All of the spaces are within Conservation Areas and many of the surrounding buildings are listed.

The open spaces are very important to the image of the city. Important buildings including City Hall, the National Museum of Wales and University overlook these well kept spaces.

Each of the three gardens has its own very different character and each retains its original layout. Given their location, large numbers of people visit and pass through. They're popular venues for lunchtime breaks.

Features of Interest

Alexandra Gardens

Located at the heart of the civic centre, Alexandra Gardens consists of 2.5 hectares of beautifully maintained flower beds and grass. The Welsh National War Memorial stands at the centre of the Gardens.





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Gorsedd Gardens

Situated in front of the National Museum, this peaceful garden was named after a ceremonial set of stones laid here to commemorate National Eisteddfod in 1899.

Friary Gardens

Constructed in honour of the third Marquess of Bute, it contains topiaries, a statue sitting upon a stone pedestal blazoned with a coat of arms, and clipped hedges around the perimeter.

History

Cathays Park was purchased from the Marquis of Bute in 1898 for new civic buildings surrounding a central park that would lead to new City Status in 1905.

Memorials

Alexandra Gardens is the setting for 'The Welsh National War Memorial'. It commemorates the soldiers who died during the First World War and a plaque for those who died during the Second World War was added in 1949.

A number of other war memorials can also be found in Alexandra Gardens. These include one to Raoul Wallenberg who was a Swedish Ambassador in Hungary and saved 100,000 people by issuing them with Swedish passports enabling them to flee to safety. A recent addition is for the men of Cardiff who were killed in action during the Falklands War. A new memorial has also recently been built dedicated to the men from the International Brigade who fought in the Spanish Civil War.

Ornamental displays

Each of the open spaces are very well kept and have excellent floral displays. Further information is provided on the Parks Website, Illustrated Plant Guide. A summary is provided below.

Alexandra Gardens:

Seasonal flower beds provide colourful displays in Spring and Summer. Rose beds are wonderful in the summer. Shrub borders include a wide variety of shrubs, flowers and colourful foliage.





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Friary Gardens:

A sunken parterre of 17 box-edged flower beds set in a triangular gravel surface.

Gorsedd Gardens:

A seasonal bedding display is the main attraction. A 'tropical' bed has also been added in recent years.

Nature

Although located right in the heart of the city, the trees and vegetation provide habitats for wildlife. The Docks Feeder Canal and the large expanse of Bute Park are in close proximity and acts as wildlife corridors.

Public Art

There are many public art features in Cathays Park including a wide range of formal statues in memory of important figures.

Facilities

There are convenient benches positioned all around the three gardens.

Access Within

A comprehensive network of flat, hard surfaced paths throughout Alexandra and Gorsedd Gardens. Friary Gardens has a small number of steps accessing the sunken garden area.

Getting There

By Foot – There are entrances to the three Gardens from surrounding streets.

By Bus - There are numerous bus routes on roads surrounding Cathays Park, including the Cardiff Open Top Tour Bus which passes down King Edward VII Avenue. Cathays Park is also in easy reach of the Central Bus Station.





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Details of bus routes and services can be found at www.cardiffbus.co.uk

By Train – The nearest train station is Cathays Station which is approximately 200 metres from Cathays Park. However, the three Gardens are also within easy reach of Cardiff Central Railway Station. Details of train services can be found at www.nationalrail.co.uk

By Car – There is limited parking on roads surrounding the three Gardens – this is operated on a voucher display system. There are numerous multi-storey car parks in the city centre.

Nearby

Cathays Park is located in the heart of Cardiff just a short walk away from the main shopping area with its many restaurants and other facilities. Other tourist attractions are also close by, including the Museum and Cardiff Castle.

Access is also good to other areas of open space:

Bute Park

A large park practically in the city centre, there are large open grassed areas as well as woodland.

Pontcanna Fields (including Sophia Gardens)

The Taff Trail runs through here and there are extensive sports pitches and recreational facilities.

Llandaff Fields

A massive wedge of open space stretching from the city centre out to Llandaff.

Cathays Cemetery

A well preserved large Victorian cemetery and retains most of its original layout and evergreen planting.

What You Said

“This garden in City Hall, lot of flowers, garden is nice.”

“Spectacular flower displays in Gorsedd Gardens and the peacefulness of Alexandra Gardens.”





Cathays Park cont...



Information and Contacts

The park is owned by Cardiff County Council and managed by the Parks Section. Further information about the park and any current events can be obtained from the [Parks Website](#).

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