

Sustainability Case Studies



PMI Los Angeles Chapter

PMI UK Chapter

PMI UK Chapter

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How the PMI UK Chapter Turns Sustainability Interest Into Everyday Project Practice



421

live attendees

20+

volunteers ran the summit

77%

of registrants attended live

67+

countries represented

01. SUMMARY

A community of practice, with a summit at its centre

When the closing keynote for PMI UK Chapter's 2025 Sustainability Summit dropped out the night before the event, the chapter turned to its network, and a regional lead from the sustainability ambassador community stepped in overnight to deliver it. The save was not luck, and it says less about event management than about what the chapter has built: a web of volunteers, ambassadors, and subject-matter experts whose sustainability knowledge runs deep enough to produce a closing keynote on no notice.

PMI UK Chapter has spent years turning member interest in sustainability into working knowledge: a weekly community of practice, an ambassador and expert network it works deliberately, a programme built around what project professionals can change in their delivery, and a flagship summit that concentrates it all into one day. SuSu26, held on 25 June 2026, reached 421 live attendees in 67 countries from 550 registrations. Those numbers travel well, but they are the output; the engine is the practice community around them, the volunteers who learn the subject by running it, and a fixed purpose: helping project professionals build People, Planet, and Prosperity into every delivery.

Strong interest in sustainability, no community to act on it

Project professionals sit at the centre of how work gets delivered, yet many have had little structured support to build sustainability into their projects. PMI UK Chapter saw the same pattern in its own membership: real interest, and few places to act on it. The chapter had run member-led communities before, on women in projects and on AI, and sustainability was the one that took hold. The question was how to turn that interest into something durable and global, without a budget, with no full-time staff, and with volunteers whose time is limited. Its answer was the Sustainability Community of Action, a member community built around practice rather than theory, with a flagship summit as the centrepiece.



Build the practice community, then let it teach

The chapter's sustainability work runs all year, not one day a year. Its Sustainability Community of Action meets weekly, and smaller events run every two to three weeks between summits. These sessions are where the practice develops: ambassadors and subject-matter experts work through sustainability topics with members, volunteers get low-stakes practice at hosting and facilitating, and the conversation keeps moving between the set pieces. The summit is the concentration point, the one day when the community's year of work reaches its widest audience.

An expert network, worked deliberately

The expertise comes through a network the chapter works deliberately. The PMI Sustainability Ambassadors network, previously the champions network, is its largest single source: the chapter meshes with the network's recruitment, meets new ambassadors early, follows up even with strong candidates who were not selected, and draws its keynotes, speakers, and hosts from the pool. Regional ambassadors gave keynotes and hosted sessions at SuSu25, returned for SuSu26, and supplied the overnight stand-in when the 2025 closing keynote fell through. At SuSu26 the closing keynote came from the network's lead, Lucila Dotto, PMI Global Head, Sustainability, delivered jointly with Dr Joel Carboni of GPM, the body behind the P5 Standard. The partnership keeps the chapter's content anchored to a recognised framework.

The pool is wider than PMI. Links to bodies such as the Association for Project Management and the Major Projects Association bring in speakers and audiences a single chapter would not normally reach, and volunteers noticed: one survey response singled out speakers from all over the globe, not only from PMI, as one of SuSu26's most successful aspects.

A programme built to change practice

The network exists to serve the content. SuSu26 was themed The Evergreen Project Manager and built to be more practical than SuSu25, a direct response to attendee feedback asking for less theory; the shift the chapter describes internally is from raising awareness to sustainability by default. Across two keynotes and 18 track sessions, speakers worked on the how rather than the why: making sustainability core to project delivery instead of a bolt-on, applying the P5 Standard, social value and the Sustainable Development Goals, AI and sustainability together, and lessons from live projects in logistics, housing, and community development. Holding the summit during London Climate Action Week tied the chapter's flagship to a wider climate moment.

Volunteers who learn the subject by running it

A core team of volunteers, recruited specifically for the event through the PMI Volunteer Engagement Platform, runs all of it, and they are expected to grow into the work. Many start as session hosts and move into larger roles; the chapter's own technical lead joined as a host a few weeks before an earlier summit and now runs production and programme management, and at SuSu26 a first-time host who was nervous about the role pushed through and delivered. Volunteers who find a taste for the stage are helped into the PMI UK chapter Toastmasters club to keep developing.



Recognition holds the model together. Every volunteer who contributes is formally recognised with a certificate, the chapter has timed events to coincide with UN International Volunteering Day, and within days of SuSu26 certificates of appreciation went to every speaker and volunteer. The chapter is also open that the model is not entirely staff-free: a part-time virtual assistant, paid for 12 hours a week, turns volunteer output into finished assets, and a small amount of reliable paid capacity multiplies what the volunteer team can deliver.

“ What I needed to make sure of was that every one of our volunteers got recognised through a certificate. ”

- Merv Wyeth, PMI UK Chapter

“ Unless you get that bedrock of volunteers, it doesn't matter what you want to build. Your volunteers are your builders. ”

- Paul Stern, PMI UK Chapter

04. THE IMPACT

What changed: practice, capability, and reach

The chapter measures the summit against behaviour, not attendance. Every session survey asks the same deliberate question, what attendees will do differently as a result of attending, and completing it is how attendees claim their professional development credit, which is why the question was answered 774 times at SuSu26. The chapter analyses the answers against each session's aims to judge whether the programme is changing practice. The strongest evidence so far is self-reported: most SuSu25 attendees said the summit changed how they think about sustainability in their projects, and whether SuSu26 changed what they do is exactly what those answers exist to test.

“ If there is no change of behaviour, the value of the event is pretty much worthless. ”

- Merv Wyeth, PMI UK Chapter

The knowledge travels. SuSu26 reached 421 live attendees in 67 countries, up from 393 attendees and 61 countries the year before, with 90% of attendees PMI members, and one volunteer's personal outreach made Zimbabwe the third-largest attendee country, a live demonstration of how far a single connected member can carry the subject. Every session recording and slide deck now sits on the chapter's YouTube channel and speaker pages, an open library of sustainable project management content that keeps teaching after the day ends.

The volunteers gain twice. The chapter's post-summit survey asks what skills people took from the work, and the answers run from marketing, website, and event delivery to the subject itself: one respondent named simply learning about sustainability as valuable in its own right. Volunteers build skills they would not get in their day jobs, from hosting and presenting to helping run a live, multi-track event, and they can show that experience on their CVs.

“ We are giving volunteers the opportunity to learn soft skills that they would not necessarily learn in their current roles.

– Merv Wyeth, PMI UK Chapter

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05. THE TAKEAWAY

What other chapters can borrow

PMI UK Chapter reaches dozens of countries on the strength of its people, not its spending. The repeatable part is the system: a year-round practice community, an expert network worked deliberately, a programme aimed at delivery rather than awareness, and volunteers who develop by running it. PMI's sustainability content, including the Certified Sustainable Project Professional (CSPP) credential and the P5 Standard, gives the chapter substance to teach; the chapter's contribution is the community that turns it into everyday practice.

THE CHAPTER'S LESSON FOR OTHERS:

Sustainability programming does not need a big budget or a central team. It needs a practice community and a disciplined way to work it: run the community all year, source expertise from the ambassador network and your own contacts, build the programme around what practitioners can change in their delivery, let volunteers learn the subject by running it, and publish everything openly so the knowledge keeps travelling.

06. WHAT'S NEXT

Scaling the practice

The cadence is increasing. Within days of SuSu26 the chapter had run a volunteer survey and a live retrospective, folded both into a formal lessons learned report, and pointed it at the chapter's fourth Sustainability Summit in early 2027, following editions in 2023, 2025, and 2026, with smaller stepping-stone events on the way. A playbook is being built from that report to give the practice a documented system.

The next push is knowledge with proof attached. The chapter wants its core volunteer team to hold the CSPP credential by 2027, supported by named skill pathways, a buddy system pairing new volunteers with experienced ones, and wellbeing check-ins. It also plans to gather short videos on sustainability work from chapters around the world, turning a global attendee map into shared practice. The aim is unchanged: deepen the knowledge and widen its reach.

07. RESOURCES

Use this story in your chapter



Event Planning Guide

A practical playbook for chapters planning events of any size →



Chapter Volunteer Engagement Guide

A practical guide for chapters recruiting, developing, and recognizing volunteers →



Sustainability Essentials Page

The starting point for chapters building sustainability into their programming →



Certified Sustainable Project Practitioner (CSPP)™

Resources to share the CSPP™ certification with your members →



PMI UK Sustainability Summits

Recordings, slides, and PDU codes from the 2023, 2025, and 2026 summits, an open library of every session →



Contact the chapter

The Sustainability Community of Action welcomes questions from other chapters, by email at sustainability@pmi.org.uk or through its contact form →