

UK Project Management Round Up



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INTRODUCTION

I had hoped that much of BREXIT would be behind us by now but it seems that, like many commentators, I was fooled by the vote possibilities. More of this shortly. The main topic this month is the state of project management professionalisation in UK. There is not much to report on major projects over the holiday period and this is, in fact, good news so I will say a few words on the topic.

GOOD NEWS

Most of UK is back at work today, after the Christmas and New Year holiday. Weather has been kind, holiday traffic has flowed despite the much anticipated “chaos” where long term road works were not lifted and although there was the odd local problem, most of us managed pretty well, thank you. Similarly, I have not yet heard of any significant issues the nation’s railway system, although we are not out of the danger period for a few more days. This all goes to show that we can have confidence in the project management teams scheduling complex engineering work on road and rail systems.

One area where we did experience major delay was due to entirely unexpected issues. This is not a significant project issue but does indicate that the role of the planner spreads into unexpected zones. Just before Christmas, the UK’s second largest airport was shut down because of the presence of unauthorised Drones. The incident ran for 3 days and has nothing to do with any projects; what it does show is that the unexpected is lurking everywhere and the use of risk analysis techniques can help manage difficult situations. It is a pity they were not used on this occasion.

BREXIT

Like most people in UK, I fully expected our Parliament to have voted on the proposed plan for the UK exit from the European Community. So I was surprised, and disappointed that the Government killed the vote, shifting it to this month. Some will

see this as simply delaying the inevitable rejection of the heads of terms and a return to political crisis. As I write this report, I note that the European Union has again rejected any possibility of re-negotiation of terms. More follows next month, if you can bear it!

PROFESSIONALISM IN UK PM

Many readers will know that the Association for Project Management set out to achieve the award of a Royal Charter. Investigations and consultations began in 2002, work was progressed under two Chairmen and a formal submission made that resulted in the award of the Charter in 2016. Since then, a great deal of behind the scenes work has taken place to get in place the mechanisms to support the revised individual qualification system, set out the ground rules for the Register of Chartered Project Professionals and a large number of other underpinning structure.

The first fruits of all this work was the release of the first List of Chartered Members in the summer of 2018. Just under 300 Chartered Project Professionals (ChPP) had qualified and many more are on the road to formal professional recognition. The personal requirements and application process can be seen here <https://www.apm.org.uk/chartered-standard/>

Other APM activities in 2018 include a new corporate partner programme with new corporate events and planned future leaders forums. The new marketing campaign has further raised APM's profile and is set to continue into 2019.

Considerable progress has been made in the educational field where APM has developed a new MOOC (massive open online course) with the Open University and has extended its academic outreach programme. As far as qualification are concerned, the new Project Management Degree Apprenticeship launched successfully and APM's new suite of individual qualifications has been aligned with IPMA's 4 level qualification.

APM has continued to engage in low level research to inform its strategy. A series of small research projects have been commissioned and reports disseminated. These supplement the adaptations of key research papers published in the International Journal of Project Management. This interesting development ensures that the gap between research and practice is bridged. There is still work to do in this area but the notion is a good one. The initial ten papers in the Chartered Thought Leadership series have been published and the results of the annual salary survey issued.

As with all membership organisations, APM maintains a strong presence on social media with a particularly active LinkedIn group. In the tangible world, routine activities include monthly branch and specific interest group meetings. APM Conferences have been held in London, Manchester and Edinburgh. In addition, the 25th Anniversary Conference of APM's Women in Project Management took place in London.

A number of special events have been held in conjunction with Infrastructure Project Authority while the Annual Awards showcased achievements in a wide range of domains.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

One of the less visible activities in project management is the development of Standards. Most countries have standards that are either internationally agreed – such as ISO 9001 or, more relevant for us – ISO 21500 or locally developed. Locally developed standards in UK are the product of British Standards Institute teams and project related local standards are developed by the MS/2 Committee. This group has completed a major revision of British Standard 6079. The draft was issued for public comment in late November 2018 and some 200 comments have been received. Work to resolve these comments begins in mid-January with a view to issuing the revised Standard in May 2019. It will be consistent with the ISO 21500 series but will use UK specific language and interpretations.

CLOSING REMARKS

Well, it has been an interesting year in the project world. In UK, we have been distracted by BREXIT but I hope, we remain alert to the opportunities that will open up as the commercial world shifts. One aspect to contemplate is the impact of reduced competition for UK contracts as it will be possible to exclude non-UK bids on major projects. This presents many possibilities, not least the ability to bid for work without international support.

About the Author



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Miles Shepherd is an executive editorial advisor and international correspondent for PM World Journal in the United Kingdom. He is also managing director for MS Projects Ltd, a consulting company supporting various UK and overseas Government agencies, nuclear industry organisations and other businesses. Miles has over 30 years' experience on a variety of projects in UK, Eastern Europe and Russia. His PM experience includes defence, major IT projects, decommissioning of nuclear reactors, nuclear security, rail and business projects for the UK Government and EU. Past Chair and Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM), Miles is also past president and chair and a Fellow of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). He is currently a Director for PMI's Global Accreditation Centre and is immediate past Chair of the ISO committee developing new international standards for Project Management and for Program/Portfolio Management. He was involved in setting up APM's team developing guidelines for project management oversight and governance. Miles is based in Salisbury, England and can be contacted at miles.shepherd@msp-ltd.co.uk.