

## **The modus operandi of Gill Nowell, EV advocate and DSO Lead, ElectraLink**

In writing this piece, I've been asked to think about the gender mix that I have encountered since working in the world of electric vehicles and energy networks. I have been lucky enough to work with some of the most incredible women engineers, strategists, customer engagement and electric vehicle specialists. On the [Electric Nation](#) project alone, a strong female cast has been at the forefront of project delivery, from Esther Dudek, Karen Platt and Elaine Meskhi at EA Technology (technical lead, customer research lead and systems engineer respectively), to Mel Potter and Vicky Reed at DriveElectric managing customer recruitment into the trials, and Nicole McNab at Impact Research, managing the customer surveys. And having now attended my first EWIRE electric vehicle networking event, I am heartened, but not surprised, at the number of women across a range of disciplines, coming together to share experience, passion and unparalleled expertise to advance the UK along the road to zero emissions.

As a passionate advocate for electric vehicles, I have been fortunate enough to work in the EV space since 2012, when on day two of my six year stint at [EA Technology](#), I was tasked with managing the bid for what was to become the £9m [My Electric Avenue](#) project. I am delighted to see the emergence of the EV Energy Task Force as I write this piece, which in its original form under the EV Network Group, was created as a result of a key piece of learning from My Electric Avenue – the need for the automotive and utilities sectors to collaborate in order to realise a smooth transition from ICE to EV.

Behind every electric vehicle advocate lies a real person. I operate in one of three modes – Mum Mode, Work Mode or Run Mode. There are days when I switch between all three, and on occasion I even find myself multi-moding; for example when I'm running I'm prone to having some of my best work-related ideas. I'll caveat this by acknowledging that these only remain 'best' if I remember them by the time I reach home.

I live just outside Chester in the North West and have had the luxury in recent years of a six-mile commute to the office. Moving jobs to work as Distribution System Operator (DSO) Lead for [ElectraLink](#) has meant a slight change in logistics, with my weekly commute now 226 miles. The decision to make the move from EA Technology to ElectraLink was not an easy one, however the opportunity in terms of career advancement and delving into the world of data to support our transition to a smarter, more flexible energy system, was too hard to resist. Plus I still get to engage in the electric vehicle arena, where access to ElectraLink's data and Energy Market Data Hub will help to catalyse the sector.

ElectraLink is a welcoming place to be – the people, the environment, the amazing coffee machine and incredible array of fruit and biscuits. I spend two days a week in London, and work from home the rest of the week. Time in the office is inevitably a mix of client and internal meetings. I like to make the most of being in real, as opposed to virtual, contact with colleagues when I'm there. I tend to spend a fair proportion of my city-based time out and about engaging with innovators, with electric vehicle data-related activity being high on my priority list at the moment.

I can liken the working ethos at ElectraLink to our shifting energy landscape as our electricity networks transition to a smarter, whole energy system. The dataset that ElectraLink manages on behalf of industry, under the Energy Market data Hub, sits at the heart of this transition. To give you an idea of what the dataset contains, we have six years' worth of data relating to every change of supplier event, sight of where every smart meter is installed; we have a view of 96% of all embedded generation on the network. In fact we have recently signed a [contract](#) to provide National Grid with this data. The dataset is analogous to the ElectraLink team. With a little innovation and plenty of flexibility, we

operate at our smartest, to the maximum benefit of not only the business, but to our customer base as a whole; just as with a little data innovation we are supporting the network operators in their move towards a smarter, more flexible energy system. Electric vehicles afford great opportunity to this new energy world, as smart charging and vehicle to grid emerge as key enablers to flexibility and smarter grid management. Data will underpin all of this.

I'm yet to try Run Mode when in London. That's next on my list. And I am delighted to engage with EWiRE. I look forward to working together to move the electric vehicle agenda forward and raise the profile of the many fantastic women involved in this space.

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