



Clare Miller

Ennis & Co Group are delighted to welcome Claire Miller as an Associate.

Claire is a mobility and energy specialist with a passion for innovation. With a Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering from Imperial College, London she has been a lifelong problem solver. Working with innovative companies across the energy and mobility ecosystem, Claire was a founding director of the EV leasing business Octopus Electric Vehicles, and an early leader at AlertMe, the company that is now a household name as Hive.

Claire is a sought-after advisor and NED to start-ups and established organisations across the electric vehicle, charging and energy flexibility ecosystem. She has experience in emerging and establishing technologies, commercial and customer propositions, and policy and regulation.

Claire is an enthusiastic technology communicator and, as a natural people person, is a prolific connector of people in all areas of her life.

What do you think is the next big thing in the EV market?

The connection between transport and energy - it's developing and evolving faster and faster. Whether it's a private car doing local journeys or a logistics firm moving goods all around the world, those vehicles can now be useful even when parked. That wasn't possible in the past; now you've essentially got a 'battery on wheels'. I've spent a lot of time looking at the energy exporting side, which involves using a vehicle to help the grid when it's not being driven. There are lots of acronyms - V2H, V2G, V2X - they're all describing ways the energy stored in a vehicle battery can be used when not driving, to run buildings, to top up

SKILLS

- Technology
- Innovation
- Strategy
- Product Development
- Business Development
- Non-Executive and Advisory Board

EDUCATION

Imperial College London

MEng, Mechanical Engineering

2000 – 2004

other vehicles, to sell to the grid and so on. Over the next 10 years ways of moving energy around in space - with electrons instead of liquid fuel - will be a key theme.

That's an important evolution, and private consumers and businesses with fleet vehicles are starting to think about new ways of saving and even making money. EV owners should be asking themselves, how do I run this vehicle as efficiently as possible? Are there smarter ways of charging the vehicle? Are there times when I could be charging and being paid to do so?

There are also new ways of charging emerging. There's the traditional physical plugging in, although at this early stage of EV ownership to call it traditional seems strange! We're going to start to see wireless charging emerging, as well as smart and bidirectional on-street charging, and we'll start to see different ways of swapping batteries, as well as adding additional batteries and range extenders.

How do you think we could improve the accessibility of EVs as we move towards the 2035 net zero targets?

In just three years' time, the automotive world is going to be very different. Lots of manufacturers will have stopped making petrol and diesel cars by 2027. We're going to start to see the price of fuel go up as demand starts to fall and at the same time, we'll see the second-hand EV market growing.

It's a rapid period of change. Really, for most, the window for buying their last new petrol or diesel car is now, if it hasn't already passed.

Now, you have EVs that have been on the road for a few years, and there are electric cars coming off

lease in volume and there's evidence to suggest they're still in really good condition. The choice of vehicles is now much wider too. Five years ago, we had fewer than ten electric models to choose from, now we have upwards of 150, and lots of variety at different price points. The second-hand market is really growing. The challenge is not about the technology itself. It's about winning hearts and minds, because it's a completely different way to own and run a vehicle.

If you have a driveway, there are cheap tariffs to charge up at home overnight. We're starting to see on-street charging coming and I think that's going to be the tipping point for a lot of people when they see it on their street. There's a snowball effect already happening, where one person in the street gets an EV and charger, then a neighbour gets one and so on.

The government is putting a lot of money into local authorities to roll out on-street charging and in municipal car parks.

Everyone will adopt EVs at their own pace, but once it's in your mindset, you know there's a charger around the corner, or outside the children's school, that's when it becomes part of the fabric of your life. And I think that's what starts to build confidence to go electric.

At the end of that ownership cycle the battery has an inherent value because the materials are really valuable. Battery recycling is going to be a really big topic: we don't have an indigenous supply of most of the raw ingredients for battery manufacturing in the UK, but through recycling we will have access to the materials we need to make more batteries in the future.

All this does mean it will be the end of the £500 banger. It's something I give a lot of thought to because a lot of people rely on the availability of cheap run-arounds. We need to be thinking about policies to help those people. In France there was recently a scheme for those on lower incomes to take a EUR100 a month 'social lease' on a vehicle. No surprise that it was very popular, so much so it's been paused. It shows the demand and need for equitable access to electric vehicles.

As a female leader in what is still a male-dominated industry, what are your thoughts on what makes a good leader?

In a way I don't know any different, because I have always been an engineer and the majority of my career has been in very male environments.

I look at it from the perspective of diversity in all directions. You don't get the best solutions, inventions, you don't come to the most creative answers, unless you have diversity of experience in

the room. For me, good leadership is to be conscious of that, and not being afraid to say, we don't have enough diversity here.

And when we talk about diversity, we need to consider lived experiences. Everybody around the table might on the surface appear very different, but if we've all been to similar schools and universities and done similar courses, and gone on to live similar lives, then we don't have a diverse team and we won't get the best results that way.

So I look to uncover those gaps in experience because you certainly won't be able to get through the tougher times without having that really diverse base.

My style is very much a servant leader. I want to work with the best people I can, I want to give them what they need and support them as best I can, then keep out of their way to do their brilliant work. Sometimes it's about being very human and open and empathetic but much of the time it's about knowing not to get in the way and letting them go for it.

What's next for you?

I want to work with and support companies who are trying to solve the big problems and the next problems. Some of those will be tech companies with physical hardware, some software solutions, but at the heart of it all is thinking about it from the customer perspective.

I've worked with quite a few startups at different stages. I look to continue to help companies move forward that are making an impact in electrification, especially where transport and energy come together.

There are so many challenging applications and use cases that we've yet to even start tackling, and I'm really keen to bring my experience to where I can make a difference.

I also want to build networks, make connections and introductions, and help people who are head down, delivering and don't have the headspace to create those connections. That's something I will be doing more of, I've already started to see the positive results it creates, it's a really effective way for me to scale my impact.

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