

EV Summit and Expo 2023

Getting up to speed on switch to EVs

The road to mass EV adoption lies within education, with modern EVs addressing a lot of the concerns the public may have in making the switch.

With over 600 attendees at the ninth annual EV Summit & Expo 2023, the RDS was filled with everyone involved in the Electric Vehicle (EV) industry, including nearly 40 innovators on display, from vehicle manufacturers to charging infrastructure providers.

The summit kicked off with a welcome from both chairs, Derek Reilly, general manager of Nevo.ie, and Geraldine Herbert, motoring editor and columnist for the *Sunday Independent*.

The opening address was delivered by Aoife O'Grady, head of Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland, who gave an update on the work done and the progress made in the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.

The good news is that Ireland has 107,000 registered EVs in the market, expected to reach 110,000 by the end of this year.

The challenge is to have 40,000 to 45,000 more EVs added for the next two years, with O'Grady optimistic as 2024 works on new data and interoperability requirements for charge point operators. In short, Ireland is going in the right direction with EVs.

The international spotlight from Petter Haugneland, assistant secretary general of the Norwegian Electric Vehicle Association, examined Norway and how it reached 82.9 per cent in zero-emissions EV market share.

"Our goal is by 2025, all new cars will be fully electric," he said. "Why has it been so successful is because of the tax system. If you want to buy a diesel or petrol car, you're taxed heavily. For zero-emission cars, they're exempt from taxes, making them competitive."

Before the audience broke up into the two streams, John Byrne, head of eMobility at ESB, gave an overview of the charging infrastructure on the island of Ireland. Describing 2023 as a record year which saw phenomenal growth, Byrne highlighted the new 100 kW technology that came in last year, which will bring on charging in Ireland.

After Byrne, the summit broke up into two stages. The first stage dealt with charging infrastructure and innovation and was chaired by Herbert, while the second stage focused on zero fleet futures and was chaired by Reilly.

Charging infrastructure

On the first stage, Herbert wasted no time bringing up the first panel, looking at the charging infrastructure, grid, and power.

This featured Danijela Klopotan, manager of network development at ESB Networks, Cathal Masterson, director of commercial operations for Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Teresa Fallon, high power infrastructure lead



The ESB ecars team at the EV Summit & Expo 2023: new 100kW technology that came in last year will bring on EV charging in Ireland Pictures: Maura Hickey

for ZEV1, and Darren Kinsella, BDM new energy landscapes for Schneider Electric.

Speaking about challenges in the next few years, Klopotan said that developing additional capacity is crucial, with long-term storage needed to hit zero carbon targets.

Next up was the panel discussing how to scale and innovate for charging in Ireland, featuring Thomas O'Hagan, CCO of Weev, Jonathan Carr, sustainability director for Havas Genus, Chris Kelly, co-founder of EasyGo, and Haugneland, returning from his international keynote speech.

One topic that came up is moving on from savvy EV users and convincing those with petrol and diesel cars, with Carr saying that "crossing the chasm" is a big challenge in the race to decarbonise.

After the coffee break, attention turned to the future for electric HGVs and alternative fuels where Jarlath Sweeney, group editor/director for Fleet Transport Publications Ireland, Aidan Flynn, chief executive at Freight Transport Association Ireland, Ciara Lambe, Ireland energy discipline lead for Arup, and Des Phelan, sustainable transport programme manager at Coillte, set the scene.

The penultimate panel before lunch looked at the charging experience, and taking the stage was Seán O'Callaghan, project development officer for the SSE; Mark Woods, chief supply chain officer for Maxol Group; Mark Trumper, director of EV and energy infrastructure for Apcoa Parking (UK), and Maebh Reynolds, founder and CEO of GoPlugable



Kevin Welstead, EV director, SSE Energy Solutions, and Seán O'Callaghan, project development officer, SSE, with the SSE team at the EV Summit

“We've got to move fast and get that infrastructure out there to get people comfortable with that transition”

Reynolds mentioned a recent survey it carried out, which found that 75 per cent of EV drivers almost exclusively charge at home, with one of the most significant barriers to switching to EVs being unable to charge at home. That, coupled with range anxiety, is a barrier to EV adoption.

"When we asked non-EV drivers what they think the range is, there's a massive disparity," she said. "When you tell them the reality, they find that the range is perfect to what they need."

Rounding off the early afternoon was a panel on the passenger car fleets, with Brian Cooke, director general at the Society of the Irish Motor Industry

(Simi), Kieran Campbell, market lead at Polestar Ireland, and Blake Boland, head of communications at The AA. Boland also referenced range anxiety, saying that more chargers are needed on the road to ease this concern and satisfy demand.

The final panel of this stage looked at delivering eMobility and sustainable living at a local and regional level. This featured Michael McGrath, local infrastructure lead for Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland, Professor Brian Caulfield, professor in transportation and head of the department for the Centre for Transport Research at Trinity College Dublin, and Fiona Brady, head of operations and public affairs, FreeNow.

FreeNow has made significant strides in electrifying its fleet, with Brady mentioning that with all the progress made, the important thing is to "re-assess, reassess, and take things on board."

Zero fleet futures

Kicking things off was Kevin Welstead, EV director at SSE Energy Solutions, chatting about the history and challenges of charging infrastructure, highlighting how important it is to get the infrastructure out there so that more people transition to EVs.

"We've got to move fast and get that infrastructure out there to get people comfortable with that transition," he said.

Following this was the panel discussion on fleet electrification and the reasons for doing so. It included Barbara Anne Richardson, sustainability and public affairs manager at Heineken

Ireland Limited, Karla Doheny, head of health, safety and sustainability at SIG Ireland, Ken Clayton, national fleet manager, Uisce Éireann and Wes O'Neill, senior fleet consultant & EV ambassador for Drivalia

Richardson touched upon how convincing drivers isn't just about switching vehicles; it's seeing how it fits into their life.

"You have to be realistic," said Richardson. "You're asking people who have been driving a certain vehicle for a period of time; it's more than A or B for them. It's their office, and you have to take that in when you're having that conversation."

After the coffee break, the next panel looked at what followed after the SEAI electric fleet trial. This included Claran Lynch, pharmacist and business owner of Fortune's Pharmacy, Emer Barry, programme manager for electric vehicles and demand generation for the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and John O'Connell, head of logistics at Barry Group.

Following this was the discussion on payments and driver reimbursements, which saw Kevin Dowling, head of partner solutions at Stripe, Niall Riddell, CEO and co-founder of Paua (UK), and Ashley Tate, MD of Allstar Chargepass up on stage.

The panel before lunch chatted about the critical considerations for operating and charging a green fleet. On stage were Rebecca Hurst, sustainability specialist at SIRO; Stephen Tummon, sustainability programme manager of DPD Ireland; Ian Clarke, head of energy, environment and utility management at Dublin Airport; and Aaron Jarvis, associate vice president of sales and business development for UK & Ireland at Geotab.

When asked about what the next steps organisations can take on their journey, Hurst said to look out for and identify businesses that can support you on your journey and which you can learn from.

After lunch, there was a fireside chat on supporting an integrated approach to ESG and corporate sustainability, which Lorraine Greene, head of engagement of the retail office at AIB, facilitated. Joining her were Catherine Guy, CEO of NiftiBusiness, and Brian O'Kennedy, managing director at Clearstream Solutions.

Rounding off the discussions here was a look at commercial e-vans and business fleet OEMs with Mark Barrett, director of Harris Maxus, Pádraig Duane, fleet business manager at Henry Ford & Son, and Fergus Conheady, sales manager for Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicles Ireland.

With both stages finished and the summit at the end, Herbert summed up the day best, saying there are a lot of challenges ahead but also a lot of hopeful signs, adding that there was no underestimating the work ahead.



Speakers on the panel: 'Charging Infrastructure, Grid and Power in Focus' Darren Kinsella, BDM New Energy Landscapes, Schneider Electric, Teresa Fallon, High Power Infrastructure Lead, ZEV1, Cathal Masterson, Director Commercial Operations, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Danijela Klopotan, Manager, Network Development, ESB Networks



Padraig Duane, fleet business manager, Ford, and the Ford team at the ninth annual EV Summit & Expo at the RDS in Dublin



Speakers on the panel: 'Fleet Electrification: Why do it and what is the business case behind it?' Ken Clayton, National Fleet Manager, Uisce Éireann; Karla Doheny, Head of Health, Safety and Sustainability, SIG Ireland; Derek Reilly, General Manager, Nevo.ie; Barbara Anne Richardson, Sustainability and Public Affairs Manager, Heineken Ireland and ; Wes O'Neill, Senior Fleet Consultant & EV Ambassador, Drivalia



Laura Dunlop, conference director, Electric Vehicle Summit & Expo; John Byrne, head of eMobility, ESB; Sarah Murphy, CEO, Business Post; Derek Reilly, general manager, Nevo.ie; Geraldine Herbert, motoring editor, Sunday Independent, and Aoife O'Grady, head of Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland



Gerard Cash, director, EasyGo; Thomas O'Hagan, chief commercial officer, Weev; Phil Barnes, strategic sales and partner development, Geotab; Kevin Welstead, EV director, SSE Energy Solutions; Shay Cloherty, managing director, IQE Ltd, Brendan Crowley, head of AIB finance & leasing, AIB; Catherine Guy, CEO, NiftiBusiness; Darren Kinsella, BDM New Energy Landscapes, Schneider Electric and John Byrne, Head of eMobility, ESB