

In the market for your first electric car? Get to know elmo

Keen to get an electric car but not sure how to go about it? You're like many others who find the process of financing and maintaining an electric car a little overwhelming. To remedy this, Olly Jones and Luke Gavin cofounded elmo, an all-inclusive electric car subscription service that aims to simplify the whole process.

What is elmo?

Elmo is an all-inclusive electric car subscription service on a mission to be the easiest way for drivers to go electric. Customers (both individuals and businesses) can book online in five minutes, get verified in 24 hours and have an electric car delivered to their door in a week.

Unlike a traditional lease, with elmo, there's no deposit to pay and customers just give 30 days' notice at any time to have the car collected or swapped. The idea is to give drivers all the benefits of owning an electric vehicle (EV), without the hassle of traditional ownership.

With an ever-expanding fleet of 100% electric vehicles, one monthly payment covers everything for drivers insurance, maintenance, servicing, breakdown

cover, road tax and a carbon offset donation (to account for manufacturing emissions) included as standard. There's the option to customise with various charging options selected by elmo's experts.

What was the catalyst for launching elmo?

Luke's experiences working at Octopus Energy and Element Energy (a strategy consultancy focussed on cleantech) led him to the realisation that switching motorists to electrified rather than fuel-powered transport ought to be a low hanging fruit in decarbonising the transport sector and reducing annual emissions generally.

Transport contributes 26% of UK annual emissions, but the data did not reflect that. Everyday people weren't switching, typically being put off by higher upfront costs, unfamiliarity with charging options, concerns around asset value and the fear of being inconvenienced by introducing an EV into their day-to-day life.

Luke confronted me with this problem and elmo is what we dreamt up to reduce the consumer adoption barriers and make switching to an EV easy.

What is elmo's mission?

Our purpose is to make getting an electric car easy, for everyone. We want to empower people to reduce their carbon emissions caused by their transport choices.

To have a meaningful impact on carbon emission reduction in a meaningful timeframe, we are aiming to help tens of thousands of drivers switch in the coming years by expanding our fleet to cater to a broad variety of budgets and needs.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

The purpose and mission haven't really deviated from what we originally set out to achieve. The focus points for how we try to execute our plan to get there are changing all the time as we listen to the needs of the market, track the progress of potential partners and secure funding to charge the next phase of growth.

We've gone from two childhood friends with an idea in a bedroom to a team in London, Birmingham and remote with thousands of users, a growing brand presence (watch out for our sponsorship of the EV Show at the British Motor Show this year!) and a proprietary subscription management technology.

How does elmo answer an unmet need?

Right now if you want to switch to an EV, you can choose to buy one that is expensive, or lease one that requires you to commit to the same car for 2-4 years. Most people are considering their first EV and may be worried about charging, range and so on.

We're making it super easy to switch to an EV with no strings attached – if people don't like the car, on elmo they are not committed for any long contract term, they haven't had to pay a big deposit and the monthly cost is competitive with a long term lease. In other words, we're empowering people to make the switch by removing the main consumer adoption barriers.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

The biggest challenge was, without question, getting to a sufficient point of traction to be able to unlock competitive vehicle financing to scale up the fleet. For a long time, we had overwhelming customer demand without the ability to buy enough cars which was a frustrating position to be in. We overcame this through perseverance, constant communication with potential investors and persuasion supported by our customer demand and market dynamics.

How do EVs fit into the future of the energy consumption ecosystem?

Electric cars run on electrons 'pumped' from your home or from public charging infrastructure. As we shift away from petrol/diesel powered transport, this will impact the amount of electricity we use and when we use it. Some people are concerned that this will put unmanageable load on the grid and cause outages. But our friends at the National Grid assure us that with smart charging, vehicle to grid and other electricity management technologies, they will actually be in a much better, data-driven position to manage our energy needs.

The second aspect to this is that we need to make sure we charge using renewable energy; otherwise, we are just indirectly powering our EVs with fossil

fuels.

At elmo, we are currently working with renewable energy suppliers to help our EV subscription customers to switch and with a number of partners offering smart charging services to suit a range of customer requirements.

What's in store for the future?

Electric cars are coming in a big way, and so are subscriptions as a new model for 'ownership'. At the end of 2020, there were only about 5,000 cars (not just electric) under subscription in the UK. That number is forecasted to be about 600,000 by 2025 which, in car terms, is enormous growth. This reflects a general shift in consumer preferences away from outright ownership towards greater flexibility.

We aim to offer the widest range of affordable subscriptions for electric cars and to do that we are going to be growing our fleet, training a world-class team to manage it and spreading the message that there's a new way to switch to an electric car.

What one piece of advice would you give to future founders?

Build something that makes your customers your loudest advocates. It might mean that they are also your harshest critics, but if you're able to listen and learn from that feedback, you will create something that people love and learn to need.

Olly Jones and Luke Gavin are cofounders at [elmo](#).