

# CEH NEWSLETTER



Cheshire **energy** hub

**DECEMBER 2017 • ISSUE 1**

*Co-Edited by Ray Burns & Alex Olney-Smith*

## Foreword

This inaugural issue of the Cheshire Energy Hub Newsletter draws together contributions from alumni, graduates, coordinators, and business. Through their articles, readers can gain insight into the wider goings-on of the hub.

From the development of soft skills to the growth of technical prowess, from advancing business to advantaging the wider community, and from reflecting on the past to shaping the future, this newsletter takes you through it all.

Enjoy!

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## TESTIMONIALS



### Anna Bromilow

I have found the CEH Graduate Programme to be a great and unique opportunity for Graduates to experience placements in other companies. To spend time with graduates from other companies in meetings, during training, and socially, is a great way make the most of this scheme and sets it apart from other programmes, including our own in SP Energy Networks.

Personally I most enjoy the quality and entertaining presentations the graduates give after each placement; hearing of all of the work you do on different projects and how much you have learnt and grown from working with other companies only proves the benefits of the CEH.

### Encirc

Encirc initially began its involvement with the CEH because we saw it as a great opportunity to network, meet our industrial neighbours, and develop shared learnings or opportunities.

Since becoming involved we have found it to be a good source of information on current and future developments within the locality that may lead to changes in the energy infrastructure within the region.

Importantly, there have also been opportunities to meet external third parties that offered energy-related services on an individual or group basis.

Our participation has since developed somewhat in that we have taken part in the graduate scheme, taking four graduates in the 2017 program. So far the graduate programme has been really successful. The graduates get invaluable hands-on experience at the UK’s major beverage supply chain business, and Encirc can continue its focus on bringing talented young people into container glass making and filling.



## ARTICLES

### Cohort 3's Lakeside Adventure

#### *Impact Training Module 1*

Ambleside, The Lake District. Glorious rolling hills interlaced with babbling streams and waterfalls. Not the view we – the 3rd cohort of the Cheshire Energy Hub graduate scheme – expected as we gathered at a quaint country hotel, and made a somewhat shy first acquaintance over lunch, both unsure of each other, and what the next few days would bring.

Soon, our learning commenced. The first day started as most team related training does, with names and interesting (or not so interesting) facts about ourselves. We then delved into MBTI with some open and honest sharing sessions about our defined personality strengths and weakness and whether we agreed with our results or not. The mental work out on the first day was broken up nicely by some competitiveness in the form of strategic orienteering which highlighted the imperativeness of communication and planning before commencing a task.

The learning from the day gave us a strong base for the tasks for the remainder of the week. We each had challenges now to work on throughout our journey – to sit back or step up – forcing us out of the natural responses we have to situations and really stepping out of our comfort zones.

With the first day's work complete, and a few glasses raised in celebration later, our acquaintance progressed to friendship. The next morning, we set off towards Lake Windermere with spirits high for our first challenge.

Here we were met by an archaic Whaling boat native to the Shetland Islands: the Yole. Pointing to the east, our instructor indicated our landing spot across the water, and as the sun peaked out and a slight sweat formed on the brow we made it to dry land.

We arrived to our next challenge nervous. One by one we leaned over the precipice and descended into the abyss of the old slate quarry. Echoes of encouragement masked the sound of knocking knees and helmets crashing into the rock face as things got a bit slippery. But we all made it to the bottom, some facing a stark fears of heights as they fell more than stepped out of their comfort zones.



Attitudes amongst the group improved as rapport was built. And the prospect of divulging our personal faults and triumphs no longer instilled fear into those who arrived as a closed book.

On our final morning it was time to capsize canoes in the freezing Lake Windermere, then right them again as a team. The rain and cold couldn't dampen our camaraderie and we completed the task, orchestrated by team members who usually wouldn't take the lead, in (almost) record time.

The impact training is excellently designed and executed, facilitating the development of teamwork skills, improved self-awareness and the ability to openly and honestly share experiences and feelings.

I for one left the experience with 9 more friends than I arrived with, a whole new skill set to take into the work place, and a renewed motivation to succeed.

*By Kate Thompson & Lara Edison*

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## Working with Impact

*Impact has partnered with the Cheshire Energy Hub since 2015 to design and deliver a ground-breaking, multi-faceted development experience focussing on emotional intelligence, business awareness and interpersonal skills in order to support the two year graduate programme.*

### About the Programme

Impact has developed an innovative and unique experiential programme that supports the learning and development of the Hub's graduates. The programme comprises of four distinct face-to-face modules with interim tasks carried out between modules that integrate with the wider graduate scheme over a two year period.

Now in its third year, the Impact programme is well established and has been progressively developed in response to the specific needs and the unique set up of the CEH. The result is a programme that seeks to provide diverse learning modules that complement and enhance the graduates' practical experiences on placement.

The distinct but connected themes of each module allow the graduates to explore their own development, providing a great platform for the graduates to establish focus and confidence as they transition into their careers in the energy industry.

Impact has sought to continually develop the programme so that the experience is kept fresh, engaging and innovative.

The most recent graduate cohort benefitted from an adapted first module that created a fully immersive two and a half day journey through the Lake District. Integral to this were interactive and challenging outdoor activities, experiential projects, and an overnight stay in a mountain hut, all of which combined to provide a great bonding experience and catalysed learning around the themes of self-discovery, emotional intelligence and collaborative working.



This is just one example of how the Impact programme has developed over the years as we look to create memorable experiences that support and challenge graduates to generate awareness, understanding, commitment and action.

## Results

The graduates have been very enthusiastic about their Impact experience: the content, learning, facilitators and location. This has resulted in developing a group of self-aware young professionals with personal strategies to use going forward in their careers.

Post programme evaluation shows that the participants have consistently rated the programme highly. With the most recent cohort scoring:

- 4.8 out of 5 when asked whether they believed the programme will benefit them personally.
- 4.5 out of 5 for whether they anticipate that their organisation will also benefit.

What some of the graduates had to say about their Impact experience:

- 'It has been of great benefit to me, which will translate into the workplace and help with my future placement swapping.'
- 'The overall experiences and discussions during the programme have really helped to give me areas to improve on, but have also given me a confidence boost.'

## The Future

One future development to the programme Impact are looking to incorporate is to include business related innovation and change projects into Module 3 that will allow the graduates to work collaboratively in cross company teams to advance their own capabilities and also benefit the wider CEH community in inspiring the aspirations of the whole initiative.

## About Impact

Impact are an independent multi-award winning global creative change agency – focused on transforming the impact of leadership action in organisations by inspiring and developing employees to grow as leaders, as managers, as talented professionals and as people.

To find out more about Impact's work visit [www.impactinternational.com](http://www.impactinternational.com)

*Contributed by Impact*

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## The Value of Graduate Presentations

At the beginning of October I attended my first set of placement presentations. This was my first time as a manager sponsoring a graduate that I had the opportunity to listen and understand how the overall placement process is impacting and benefitting graduates.

I was particularly impressed by the diversity and range of the placements undertaken, and this was reflected in the quality of the presentations. Each of the graduates confidently delivered their presentation and competently fielded questions from the audience, displaying acumen and knowledge in their chosen subject. Clearly the placement process has significantly impacted the development and growth of the individuals, to the point whereby they could confidently present to their peers and sponsors.

It was especially interesting listening to the variety of challenges that the graduates had experienced during their various placements, which mirror the challenges they will face when pursuing their future careers. This clearly demonstrates the value of the rotational assignments, and that well thought out placements, purposefully designed to align to their chosen career paths, can benefit graduates personally and professionally. The presentations reinforced to me the importance of the sponsoring companies planning placements so that they not only add value to the organisation, but also meet the needs of the graduates.

For future end of placement presentations, in addition to hearing what the graduates actually did, I would personally like to see more reflection from each graduate to hear and confirm that they understand how they would apply their learning back in the workplace. This would be of benefit to the sponsoring companies as it would confirm closure of the learning experience and illustrate how the learning will be applied in practice.

The value of these experiences in building the confidence of the graduates is really setting them up for great futures and I am personally proud to have participated in the programme and to have assisted in the development of the graduates.

*By Fran Gradie*

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## Learning from Change

### *A Year and a Half in the Cheshire Energy Hub*

Since accepting a place on the Cheshire Energy Hub graduate programme, I have got quite good at dealing with change. That is just as well, because change has come in many forms over the past year and a half.

The first big change: moving 266 miles across the country. This adjustment was significant for me not least because I was moving into the unknown; before I heard of the CEH, I'd never even been to the North-West of England and now, all of a sudden, I was moving there!

The next big change was starting on the programme. I'd had jobs in the past, but the CEH wasn't a "job", it was the beginning of a "Career" (with a capital C). I was setting out to become an Engineer (capital E) and people were actually expecting me to have learnt something from all that time I spent at uni and to, somehow, 'apply it'.

To help me settle into the area, I made use of the wonderful phenomena that is meeting strangers off the internet (meetup.com if you're interested), and managed to quickly make some friends and get to know the area. Fast-forward to today, and I am now the lead organiser of a growing social group based in the Chester area with over 1,000 members.

Work was a little trickier to get a handle on though.

The process of getting started and settling into new work environments has been a repeating challenge on my journey through the CEH, as I have moved from placement to placement, or even different departments within the same company. This, more than anything else, is what I feel has allowed me to best face, adapt to, and grow from change.

Starting at EA Technology, I was in a small office with 2-3 other people. This helped me to ease into the environment, and slowly spread my wings. On reflection however, I was very much in my comfort zone. In these first months I developed a handful of very productive relationships, but didn't stretch myself to explore the wider company.

During my time at SPEN, I somehow slingshot to the other end of the spectrum; I made few lasting professional relationships but, in my objective to experience as many parts of the business as possible, I met and worked with countless people, albeit often only for a short time. This forced me to become better at adapting to new situations and new people. By necessity, the longer I spent at SPEN, the quicker I was to come out of my shell as I completed my whirlwind tour of SP Energy Networks.

And now, although I have not yet finished my time at Urenco, already I know I have got off to a more balanced start. Being in a fixed location, I have again developed relationships with and relied on those close to me for support. But, this time around, I have also been exploring the business and working with a diverse range of people from multiple teams as I go about my work.

Since part of the whole appeal of the CEH graduate programme is the opportunity to change role and company every 6 months, it's nice to know that I've learned something from it. And, fingers crossed, I'll be able to 'apply' some of that learning to any changes that come along going forward.

By Ray Burns

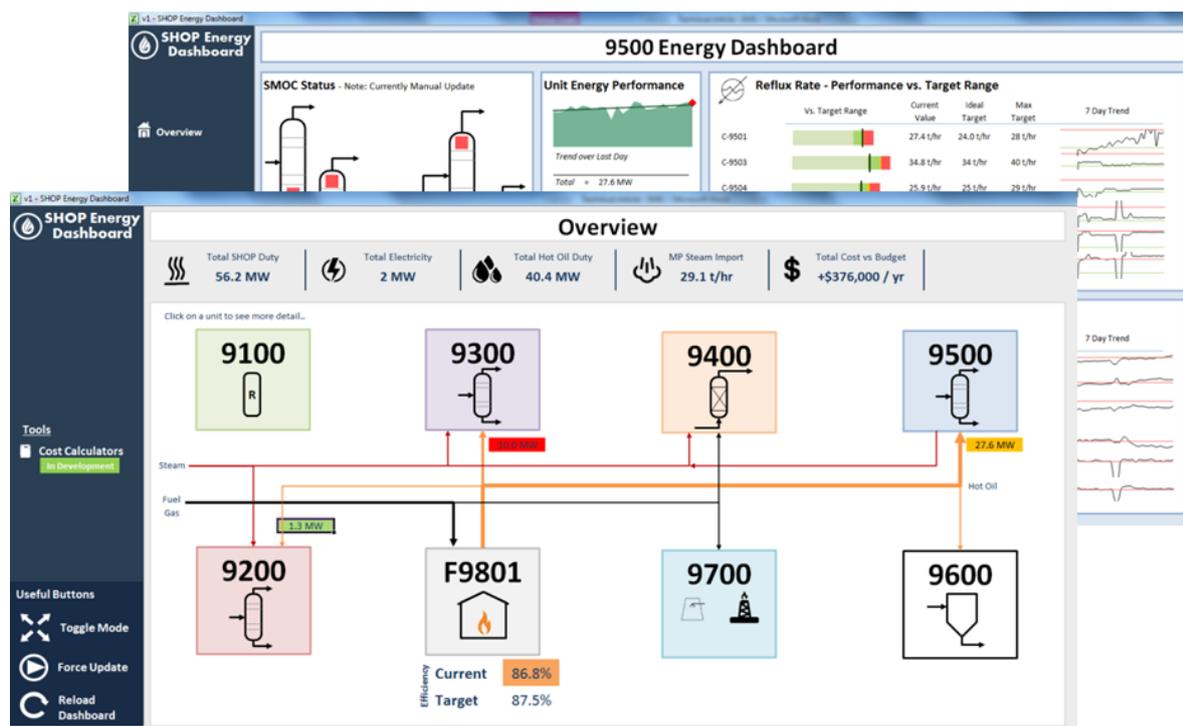
## Implementing an Energy Management System

### A Technical Focus

An Energy Management System allows proactive monitoring of a plant's energy performance, and highlights where improvements and optimisations can be made to meet operational targets. Following on from Lauren Doyle's graduate placement at Essar which produced an EMS for the main refinery, I was tasked with designing and implementing a similar system on one of the petrochemical plants at Stanlow. Energy overspend on this plant last year was estimated to be \$2.4m and as such projects were put in place to bring this back to a favourable status. The implementation of an EMS is the last of these projects, designed to sustain changes into the long term and identify further areas that can be optimised.

For this project I have based the EMS around an Energy Dashboard which is managed by panel operators in the control room. The energy dashboard I have created allows the operators to see how energy is being used on the plant in near real time. The key challenges in implementing this dashboard were obtaining operator buy-in and simplifying complex calculations to figures that can be glanced at and understood quickly if action is required. The vision is that the focus will be maintained by the shift production team leaders who use a high level overview of the dashboard to drive optimisations in the required plant areas on a shift to shift basis.

In the current version of the dashboard each of the boxes on the overview page is a part of the plant. I have created the dashboard in excel, which has both pros and cons, but so far operational feedback on the system has been positive. I have used my previous experience of VBA coding (mostly developed at Storengy) and interfaced it with an Essar system called OSISoft Pi to update the data every 2 minutes when the dashboard is active in order to give a live system.



The dashboard uses the typical RAG (Red, Amber & Green) scale to prompt the operator when interaction is required. A key focus of the dashboard is monitoring the total heat duty being consumed by the plant. The specific pages then focus on areas such as the efficiency of the hot oil furnace, a breakdown of the steam usage, and the efficiencies of the distillation columns. Additionally, I have worked with the other plant Process Engineers to develop a multivariable linear regression which sets the energy targets based on current feed rate to a column and other plant conditions such as pressure, temperature and product quality.

To summarise, I am really enjoying this project as it builds on the experience I have gained at my previous two placements: Urenco and Storengy. It has also allowed me to use my Chemical Engineering degree (e.g. in the efficiency calculations on re-boilers for distillation columns and absorbed duties in the furnace), something I haven't utilised much thus far. Going forward, my targets are to:

- Continue to get buy-in from the operations team by developing their suggestions.
- Implement a shift team leader driven energy management process including:
  - A reporting structure.
  - Inclusion of energy targets on the morning meeting agenda.
  - A review of optimisation targets each shift.
- And setup a monthly energy meeting where issues with achieving the targets can be discussed.

*By Alex Olney-Smith*

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## The North West Women's Network

### *Behind the Scenes*

Reflecting back on my role in the first year for the North West Women's Network, which organised two events attended by around 200 people, it was a whirlwind.

I love the energy in a room where people are connecting over similar interests and passions, sharing new perspectives and making connections. A year on from an inspirational Women's Networking event in November 2015 it became apparent to me that a follow-on was not coming so I set about exploring how to create just such as event myself.

I requested a meeting with colleagues from across Capenhurst who'd attended or shown an interest in the original event. Women from all stages of careers, backgrounds and roles came together and confirmed the need and desire for such an event. We brainstormed the necessary elements and a number of the attendees volunteered their support to make it happen.

### *But why a Women's Network?*

People sent home for not wearing heels, a pay gap of almost £2 million between the top male and female presenters at the BBC, allegations of widespread sexual harassment and assault not only in Hollywood but in our very own parliament... these are just three of the news pieces that reached the headlines, how many didn't ?

According to McKinsey, bridging the gender gap in work has the potential to create an extra £150 billion on top of business-as-usual GDP forecasts for the UK in 2025. The 'Gender Parity' report states that the North West has some of the greatest opportunities for potential gains.

At our November event Mandy Hickson told us how she had failed the aptitude test to join the RAF. Twice. This usually means a veto on any further attempts, but she somehow managed to join the scheme as a 'test case', going on to successfully lead front-line squadrons in Iraq. The RAF discovered much later that their tests had been biased. Had the RAF not been open to change, Mandy's talents could have been lost. Not everyone will have such resilience in the face of direct (and indirect) negative messaging . And girls are often made to feel that STEM subjects are 'not for them'.

WISE research shows there is approximately a 400,000 shortfall in STEM professionals each year. To plug this gap, the industry needs to ensure it is considering and encouraging the whole talent pool. This is what the NWWN set out to do, to retain women in the industry and develop them so that the next generation has role models. Event feedback so far supports this. And I should add that our events are open to all.

*Why did I do it?*

The gender equality issue was a big driver for me, but so was the opportunity for personal development.

There have been many learning points but two of my most memorable experiences, because of their nerve-racking nature, were the pitch for sponsorship to the Cheshire Energy Hub board and my opening speech at the May event. At both of these I tried to bear in mind what Karen Darke (Gold Paralympian and previous speaker) said: FEAR is False Expectations Appearing Real. By facing my fears I was able to take steps to overcome them, bringing me a sense of fulfilment and self-esteem.



If you think you are able to support getting sponsors on board and running events (as part of a team!) then please get in touch. Thinking you can and having a strong desire is all you need!

*By Elaine Meskhi*

## Reflecting Back on the CEH

### *An Outside Perspective*

I was with the Cheshire Energy Hub Graduate Scheme for a total of 12 months, during which I completed a placement at my sponsor company – Storengy UK – and Urenco. I originally applied to the CEH because of the wide range of experiences it offered, which I hoped would allow me to understand more about what I wanted to do in the future. As an Engineering Graduate, I had little to no experience working in industry, something that I was looking to gain, through the placement structure, across multiple companies.

During my first placement, at Storengy, I worked within the Engineering Maintenance department where I was involved with plant and electrical maintenance projects. Though this was different from what I had learnt in University, it gave me a wider understanding of engineering, something I wouldn't have gained elsewhere.

On my external placement at Urenco UK I was given a different experience by working with the System Engineering team. This department deals with a wide variety of tasks and projects but is more focused on the longer term strategy needed to maintain the operations of the plants rather than day-to-day operations. This was an interesting contrast to my previous placement, and the opportunity I was given

to fulfil a mechanical engineering role meant that I could use my engineering degree knowledge, on a day to day basis.

I have taken the decision to leave the scheme because I have identified what I consider to be the next best step, both in my career, and my personal life. However I would not have been able to make this career move if it wasn't for the experience I gained as part of the CEH.

Leaving the scheme has also given me the opportunity to reflect on what could be improved on the graduate programme. I feel that the scheme would benefit from extending the six month placements to longer periods, as this would enable graduates to get more involved, develop more experience and contribute more to the work in their placement companies.

I have been able to take many positive experiences from the programme, in particular the Impact International development modules. "Module 1: Leading self" has allowed to me practice different forms of communication, think about team working skills and to be more confident with my day to day work. In summary, my time on the graduate scheme has helped me to gain valuable industry experience, allowing me to define a career path for myself.

*By Findlay Jenkins*

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## Graduating a Graduate Scheme

### *An Alumni's Perspective*

Looking back to my final year at university and the vast number of graduate scheme applications I was completing, the Cheshire Energy Hub was the one I really wanted to get on to. It gave me the freedom to work across the energy sector, to learn as much as I could as quickly as I could, and to experience completely different types of companies. And best of all, after four years living, studying and working away, it was close to home.

What I didn't initially think about, were the people I would get to meet. The CEH brought together an eclectic mix of top graduates with different backgrounds, experiences, ambitions and personalities, and it's been a privilege to get to know them all. Additionally we were granted the opportunity to meet and learn from world leading professionals across a range of specialisms, which would have been impossible on any other scheme. We've been given a fantastic opportunity over the last two years, but I think I speak on behalf of all my contemporaries when I say we've also made some real friendships along the way.

As for the scheme itself: what a whirlwind! It always seemed that no longer had I settled into a job, was I being rushed off into another company, with another manager to understand, workplace etiquette to get the hang of and a whole new structure to get my head around. Whilst always remembering that I was going to return to my own company so I better not forget any of their rules, and oh, along the way I should probably pick up some good habits and working practices... Who doesn't like a challenge?

Of course the six monthly presentations would roll around like clockwork and the sounds of nervous graduates could be heard across the scheme. "Are you prepared?", "How many slides have you got?" In reality, those nerve racking presentations were a real highlight, both to deliver and to witness. It gave us the chance to hear about the exciting projects everyone had been involved in and to see individual graduates grow, mature and become professionals.

Though the 'original cohort' are now on their way out of the graduate scheme, I think we all know that there is still a world of information to learn and a lifetime of growth and opportunity to come. With that in mind, I know that we will all continue to support, encourage and to learn from each other on the journey ahead.

*By Matthew Jones*

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## An Interview with Steve McIntosh

*Steve McIntosh has been a part of the Cheshire Energy Hub graduate programme from very nearly the beginning. For this article I interviewed him to get a take on the CEH from his perspective.*

### ***How and why did the graduate scheme come about?***

Well, Ged Barlow [C-Tech], Robert Davies [EA Technology], and Simon [Urenco] went for a meal one night and started discussing how they could collaborate towards a common goal that would stimulate a lot of interest. They decided that focusing on the skills gap was the easiest way to get buy-in to the idea of collaboration from the various companies.

Later, around January 2014, some of the later coordinators were invited together to brainstorm about a graduate scheme and how collaboration could give added value to it, and ultimately present a proposal to the board.

Although the CEH is actually older than the graduate scheme, the other projects being developed by the CEH have only really come about in the past 18 months. Previous to that there was a lot of speculation about what could happen, but the graduate scheme was the first big initiative.

### ***What's been the biggest change to the scheme you've seen?***

Not much has needed to change as the companies have been really happy with the graduates. Atkins's withdrawal – due to internal business requirements – meant a different recruitment process was needed as Atkins originally provided this for the CEH.

Atkins may re-join the graduate programme in the future.

### ***Where do you think the scheme will go in the future?***

The CEH wants to develop graduates with business acumen and commercial awareness. Graduates who can learn from their successes and failures.

In the future there may be more commercial graduates recruited – graduate disciplines may even be further diversified – however this would lead to changes in the way graduates are swapped on placement. Many companies want a 1-in 1-out arrangement in regards to graduate discipline. Some are more flexible than others, but there are limits. Especially if you introduce more graduates without an Engineering background.

### ***What do you enjoy most about your role in the CEH?***

Myself, along with Rebecca Barnes [Urenco], Stephen Kelly [SPEN], Hannah Newton [C-Tech], and Selena [Atkins] amongst others, were part of the development group which initially brought the graduate scheme together. I think it is one of the best projects I've ever been involved with and I'm very satisfied with what we achieved together.

### ***What do you find most challenging?***

Balancing the day job with what was initially a side project. There were times when we [the development group] we had spare time, and times when we were busier, but without a written agreement we made it work. No bickering, no conflict. It was a really good bunch of professional people.

### ***What's the one thing you'd change if you could?***

I feel like the perception is that we got it right with the graduate scheme. The end product [the graduates] is proof of that. That's why the project was so satisfying to be part of.

### ***What's been your most memorable experience on the scheme so far?***

After the assessment centres but before they began their placements, there was an engagement event for the first cohort at Chester Race Course. Seeing all the graduates coming together stands out and made it more real.

Also, for the first Impact Module, Hannah and I attended. Seeing the aspiration to learn and engage, as well as seeing the more vulnerable side that comes out on an intensive residential course was very memorable. Seeing mistakes being made and learnt from. Being in a position where they were going to you for feedback and doing 1-2-1 sessions with them.

### ***Is there any advice you would give to the graduates?***

Take your opportunities while you've got them and take responsibility to drive it.

*By Ray Burns*

## USEFUL INFO

### Freedcamp & LinkedIn

Freedcamp is the online portal used by the graduates to share useful documents related to the CEH. To request access, please contact [ray.burns@eatechnology.com](mailto:ray.burns@eatechnology.com).

Useful documents available on Freedcamp include:

- [Contact details](#) for graduates and coordinators.
- [Templates](#) for recording competence development.
- [Example](#) 6-monthly presentations.
- New starters [guides](#) for starting new placements.
- Minutes of [graduate](#) meetings and [coordinator](#) meetings.

A brand new CEH LinkedIn page can also be found [here](#).

### Dates

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
January 18 <sup>th</sup>	CEH Board Meeting	Please contact Ray Burns with any questions you would like conveyed to the board.
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	CEH Graduate Meeting Graduate Energy Centre Visit	Please ensure you review your actions from the previous meeting before attending.
W/C March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Cohort 3 Presentations Cohort 3 Impact Module 2	
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Cohort 3 Start Placement 1	
W/C April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Cohort 2 Presentations Cohort 2 Impact Module 4	
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	Cohort 2 Return to Sponsor	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in, and everyone who made a contribution to, this newsletter and made it possible. It is my hope that this newsletter will develop into a bi-annual periodical enabling the members of the Cheshire Energy Hub to keep up to date with the activities of the graduates, the alumni, the coordinators, and the board members.

The vision is that this newsletter will act as one of many cornerstones holding the wider CEH network together, fostering communication, collaboration, and innovation across the various member companies and institutions of the hub.

Although this inaugural issue will no doubt show room for improvement, your feedback is welcome, and together we can continue to build this publication into a top source of CEH news.

**The next issue will be in the summer of 2018. Please get in touch if you would like to get involved.**

*Ray Burns*