

services area manager Bernard Gloster and hospital group manager Mary Halpin, only learned that their responsibilities were being removed following media reports on Friday morning.

Mr Gloster and Ms Halpin were among a number of managers who were promoted or took on extra responsibilities

Limerick Leader that prior to last Thursday's announcement, Dr Reilly had "advised the HSE that an announcement was imminent and he also notified the HSE of his intention to brief local public representatives on the planned changes".

"The Minister considers it important that political representatives

management team that the work we started on this year and had produced results on, both in quality and reducing the deficit, cannot continue," Mr Gloster told the Limerick Leader.

"I am not in a position to comment any more than that as obviously matters arise from it for me," he added.

"The minister has made clear that he intends to move to a situation where hospitals act as autonomous trusts as opposed to the current model, where many of them are managed directly by the HSE.

"Also the minister is making clear that increasingly, individual hospitals will become

week", said Mr Pike.

He added that while the new model with a CEO over a group of hospitals was "being portrayed as a step forward, it is actually a step back".

There had previously been a hospital network manager for the Mid-West, with John O'Brien a recent occupant of that role.



The long goodbye: Sean McGowan and his wife Lorraine bid farewell of his vessel Tess, in which he rowed solo across the Atlantic Ocean a year and a half ago

Picture: Owen South

# Historic vessel Tess is sold abroad as brave rower hangs up his oars

**Anne Sheridan**

A LITTLE piece of sporting history left Limerick this week, after record-breaking rower Sean McGowan sold his vessel to an American buyer.

His beloved vessel Tess, which saw him row solo across the Atlantic Ocean in May 2010, will leave from Dublin in a container to Southampton in the UK, and eventually find its new home in Connecticut before Christmas.

Numerous appeals were made to Limerick City Council to purchase the boat and keep it in Limerick for historic

appeals, however the council said no funding was available for this purpose.

Mr McGowan, from Farranshone, said it was a "sad day" to finally bid farewell to Tess, which saw him safely land in the Caribbean after 118 days at sea, but added "it had to happen some day".

He said he had to sell the boat, which cost £20,000, for financial reasons, and it was sold for just under €20,000.

The American buyer, John Bauby, travelled to Ireland to see the boat three weeks ago, following interest from five men across the world, who are

keen rowers.

Mr Bauby, who is also a diver, plans to use Tess to set his own record - in becoming the first American to row the North Atlantic solo in 2013.

"It's a little bit of history really and a fitting end to the year as Limerick was the European City of Sport this year. She's a good boat and she's doing what she's intended to do, which is row an ocean.

"A chapter has been closed now; my days of ocean rowing are finished. I have no plans of going to sea again, none" he told the Limerick Leader.

"I had a few people that wanted to buy her, but I

held on and held on, but eventually I had to sell her," he said.

However, a part of his epic lone voyage will remain in Limerick. One of the oars he used, which racked up 1.7 million strokes, is now proudly displayed over the bar in Dolan's on the Dock Road. Proprietor Mick Dolan is a friend of Mr McGowan's and the venue also hosted numerous fundraisers during his trip, with €23,000 raised for an African charity, the Soweto Connection.

He is currently writing a book of his journey from La Gomera in the Canaries to Antigua in

the Caribbean, and for his next big challenge he is contemplating trekking across Greenland.

In the meantime, he and a group of local men are planning to cycle around Ireland over three weeks next April. As part of that challenge, all participants have to bring their own food and tents with them, and are only allowed to buy water.

A coach with Shannon Rowing Club, he appealed to young people to take up the sport. "Their parents don't have to be worried about me dragging them across an ocean, it's just local rowing," he reassured.