

## Siopa Glas RTE Radio 1

You're listening to the county measure and we're in Carlow.

The small town of Ballon here in Carlow on the N80 is no different, population of about 800, very busy main street, but there's an initiative from just over 10 years ago that makes the place quite particular, now we're going to find out a little more about An SiopaGlas.

The old garage that is now An SiopaGlas is a unique Carlow Aladdin's cave of things, almost the proverbial needle to an anchor here, clothes, books, crockery and toys. Maire George is our guide.

A lot of people moved down from Dublin at a time of the Celtic tiger, so now since covid a lot of them work from home so it eased the pressure of some people so an awful lot of industries feeding into it, especially the agricultural industries, the big abattoir and a big saw mill out the road.

I love the name of the pub across the road 'The Bull Tree Bar'

The Bull Tree Bar, that's historic, there was a whole row of those trees at one time and that's the last remaining one, they used to tie the bulls to that on the market days and that's where that got its name.

And are you a local woman yourself?

No, I'm not! I blew in 50 years ago from a place called Tralee, there's loads of blow ins now, we never thought there would be Ukrainians living on both sides of us, you know and that's the way it is, we have 70 of them over in the hall, in our community centre.

This is the back room, this is where all the work happens, this is Deirdre and this is Brigit.

Hello, you get a lot of stuff every week don't you, Oh every day, every hour.

We go through all the donations, the bags of clothes and that, books, things for Christmas, we put them together and check that no things are broken.

Every penny that comes through here goes into Ballon Improvement Group, we use it to maintain the village and it goes to the two schools and then we bought a new community house, we were able to give a hefty donation towards it.

60 or 70 bags there, packed full of clothes and donations, ties, shoes, everything in the one bag, delph everything like that. Handle them all with care, yes that's right.

What is some of the remarkable things you have got over the years, I'm sure you have got some remarkable things, a set of false teeth, that's a good donation alright! Yes we couldn't do much with them, maybe they just fell into the bag