Wilbert Smith

Role
Committee Member for the South West
From early childhood Wilbert Smith has had a deep-rooted interest in people, their history, culture and livelihoods. Trained as a development planner, he has served rural and urban communities in the Caribbean, South Asia, West Africa and the UK.

After completing an MSc in National Development and Project Planning in 1990 at the University of Bradford, he returned to Guyana and headed up the branch office of the Guyana Cooperative Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank before moving on to facilitate the design, management and evaluation of Multilateral Technical Assistance programmes in Guyana.

From 1996 until 2005 Wilbert focused on researching and developing cases for supporting governance and decentralisation, education and health, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS programmes in the Maldives, the Gambia and Ghana. During this time he was drawn to the richness and similarity of the cultural heritage in South Asia and West Africa with that of Guyana where Amerindians, Asians and Africans come together to celebrate the festivals of Mashramani, Eid-al-Fitr, Deepavali, Chinese Dragon Boat and Emancipation. These experiences evoked a strong interest in and commitment to value, understand and share heritage.

In 2013/14 Wilbert orchestrated the establishment of Christchurch First World War Commemoration programme, drawing together local armed forces associations and the wider community to remember those who fell in First World War and commemorate the contributions they made to our peace and safety today.

In 2015 he brought together minority groups across the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch conurbation to participate in an HLF information-sharing event and introduced Holocaust Memorial commemoration activities in Christchurch. He is a founding member and trustee of the Christchurch Culture and Learning Arena which led the celebration of the Magna Carta 800th anniversary with a re-enactment of King John’s many visits to Christchurch.

He is currently employed as a community and recreation officer at Christchurch and East Dorset Council, enabling local communities to value, manage and promote their heritage.