

The Connecticut Colony Charter

1662

CHARLES THE SECOND, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the Faith, &c.; To all to whome this presents shall come Greetinge:

WHEREAS, by the severall Navigacons, discoveryes and susccessfull Plantacons of diverse of our loving Subjects of this our Realme of England, Severall Lands, Islands, Places, Colonies and Plantacons have byn obtayned and settled in that parte of the Continent of America called New England, and thereby the Trade and Comerce there hath byn of late yeares much increased,

AND WHEREAS, wee have byn informed by the humble Peticon of our Trusty and welbeloved John Winthrop, John Mason, Samuell Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woollicott, John Talcott, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obedias Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Haukins, John Deming and Mathew Camfeild, being Persons Principally interested in our Colony or Plantacon of Connecticut in New England, that the same Colony or the greatest parte thereof was purchased and obteyned for greate and valuable Consideracons, And some other part thereof gained by Conquest and with much difficulty, and att the onely endeavours, expence and Charge of them and their Associates, and those vnder whome they Clayme, Subdued and improved, and thereby become a considerable enlargement and addicon of our Dominions and interest there.

--NOW KNOW YEA, that in consideracion thereof, and in regard the said Colony is remote from other the English Plantacons in the Places aforesaid, And to the end the Affaires and Business which shall from tyme to tyme happen or arise concerning the same may be duely Ordered and managed.

WE HAVE thought fitt, and att the humble Peticon of the Persons aforesaid, and are graciously pleased to Create and Make them a Body Pollitique and Corporate, with the powers and Priviliges herein after menconed; And Accordingly Our will and pleasure is, and of our especiall grace, certeine knowledge and meere mocon wee have Ordeyned, Constituted and Declared, And by this presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, Doe Ordeine, Constitute and Declare That they, the said John Winthrop, John Mason, Samuell Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woollcot, John Talcot, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming and Mathew Camfeild, and all such others as now are or hereafter shall bee Admitted and made free of the Company and Society of our Collony of Connecticut in America, shall from tyme to tyme and forever hereafter, bee one Body Corporate and Pollitique in fact and name, by the Name of Governour and Company of the English Collony of Connecticut in New England in America; And that by the same name they and their Successors shall and may have perpetuall Succession, and shall and may bee Persons able and Capable in the law to Plead and bee Impleaded, to Answer and to be Answered vnto, to Defend and bee Defended in all and Singular, Suits, Causes, quarrelles, Matters, Accons and things of what kind or nature soever, And alsoe to have, take, possesse, acquire and purchase lands Tenements or hereditaments, or any goods or Chattells, and the same to, Lease, Graunt,

Demise, Alien, bargaine, Sell and dispose of, as other our leige People of this our Realme of England, or any other Corporacon or Body Politique within the same may lawfully doe.

AND FURTHER, that the said Governour and Company, and their Successors shall and may for ever hereafter have a Comon Seale to serve and vse for all Causes, matters, things and affaires, whatsoever of them and their Successors, and the same Seale to alter, change, breake and make new from tyme to tyme att their wills and pleasures, as they shall thinke fitt. And further, wee will and Ordeine, and by theis presents for vs, our heires and Successors Doe Declare and appoint, that for the better ordering and managing of the affaires and businesse of the said Company and their Successors, there shall be one Governour, one Deputy Governour and Twelve Assistants to bee from tyme to tyme Constituted, Elected and Chosen out of the Freemen of the said Company for the tyme being, in such manner and forme as hereafter in these presents is expressed; which said Officers shall apply themselves to take care for the best disposing and Ordering of the Generall business and affaires of and concerning the lands and hereditaments herein after menconed to bee graunted, and the Plantacon thereof and the Government of the People thereof. And for the better execucon of our Royall Pleasure herein, WEE DOE for vs, our heires and Successors, Assigne, name, Constitute and appoint the aforesaid John Winthrop to bee the first and present Governour of the said Company; And the said John Mason to bee the Deputy Governour; And the said Samuell Willis, Mathew Allen, Nathan Gold, Henry Clerke, Richard Treat, John Ogden, Thomas Tappen, John Talcott, Thomas Wells, Henry Woolcot, Richard Lord and Daniell Clerke to bee the Twelve present Assistants of the said Company; to contynue in the said severall Offices respectively, vntill the second Thursday which shall bee in the moneth of October now next comeing.

AND FURTHER, wee will, and by theis presents for vs, our heires and Successors DOE Ordaine and Graunt that the Governour of the said Company for the tyme being, or, in his absence by occasion of sicknes, or otherwise by his leave or permission, the Deputy Governour for the tyme being, shall and may from tyme to tyme vpon all occasions give Order for the assembling of the said Company and calling them together to Consult and advise of the businesse and Affaires of the said Company, And that for ever hereafter Twice in every yeare, (That is to say,) on every Second Thursday in October and on every Second Thursday in May, or oftener, in Case it shall bee requisite, The Assistants and freemen of the said Company, or such of them, (not exceeding twoe Persons from each Place, Towne or Citty) whoe, shall bee from tyme to tyme therevnto Elected or deputed by the major parte of the freemen of the respective Townes, Cittyes and Places for which they shall bee soe elected or Deputed, shall have a generall meeting or Assembly, then and their to Consult and advise in and about the Affaires And businesse of the said Company; And that the Governour, or in his absence the Deputy Governour of the said Company for the tyme being, and such of the Assistants and freemen of the said Company as shall be soe Elected or Deputed and bee present att such meeting or Assembly, or the greatest number of them, whereof the Governour or Deputy Governour and Six of the Assistants, at least, to bee Seaven, shall be called the Generall Assembly, and shall have full power and authority to alter and change their dayes and tymes of meeting or Generall Assemblies for Electing the Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants or other Officers or any other Courts, Assemblies or meetings, and to Choose, Nominate and appoint such and soe many other Persons as they shall thinke fitt and shall bee willing to accept the same, to bee free of the said Company and Body Politique, and them into the same to Admitt and to

Elect, and Constitute such Officers as they shall thinke fitt and requisite for the Ordering, Manageing and disposing of the Affaires of the said Governour and Company and their Successors. AND WEE DOE hereby for vs, our heires and Successors, Establish and Ordeine, that once in the yeare for ever hereafter, namely, the said Second Thursday in May, the Governour, Deputy Governour, and Assistants of the said Company and other Officers of the said Company, or such of them as the said Generall Assembly shall thinke fitt, shall bee in the said Generall Court and Assembly to be held from that day or tyme, newly Chosen for the yeare ensuing, by such greater parte of the said Company for the tyme being then and there present. And if the Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants by these presents appointed, or such as hereafter bee newly Chosen into their Roomes, or any of them, or any other the Officers to bee appointed for the said Company shall dye or bee removed from his or their severall Offices or Places before the said Generall day of Eleccion, whome wee doe hereby Declare for any misdemeanour or default to bee removeable by the Governour, Assistants and Company, or such greater part of them in any of the said publique Courts to be Assembled as is aforesaid, That then and in every such Case itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants and Company aforesaid, or such greater parte of them soe to bee Assembled as is aforesaid in any of their Assemblies, to proceede to a New Eleccion of one or more of their Company in the Roome or place, Roomes or Places of such Governour, Deputy Governour, Assistant or other Officer or Officers soe dyeing or removed, according to their discretions; and immediately vpon and after such Eleccion or Eleccions made of such Governour, Deputy Governour, Assistant or Assistants, or any other Officer of the said Company in manner and forme, Aforesaid, The Authority Office and Power before given to the former Governour, Deputy Governour or other Officer and Officers soe removed, in whose stead and Place new shall be chosen, shall as to him and them and every of them respectively cease and determine.

PULMVIDED, alsoe, and our will and pleasure is, That as well such as are by theis presents appointed to bee the present Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants of the said Company as those that shall succeed them, and all other Officers to bee appointed and Chosen as aforesaid, shall, before they vndertake the Execucon of their said Offices and places respectively, take their severall and respective Corporall Oathes for the due and faithfull performance of their duties in their severall Offices and Places, before such Person or Persons as are by these Presents hereafter appoynted to take and receive the same; That is to say, the said John Winthrop, whoe is herein before nominated and appointed the present Governour of the said Company, shall take the said Oath before one or more of the Masters of our Court of Chancery for the tyme being, vnto which Master of Chancery WEE DOE, by theis presents, give full power and authority to administer the said Oath to the said John Winthrop accordingly. And the said John Mason, whoe is herein before nominated and appointed the present Deputy Governour of the said Company, shall take the said Oath before the said John Winthrop, or any twoe of the Assistants of the said Company, vnto whome WEE DOE by these presents, give full power and authority to Administer the said Oath to the said John Mason accordingly. And the said Samuell Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolcott, John Talcott, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden and Thomas Welles, whoe are herein before Nominated and appointed the present Assistants of the said Company, shall take the Oath before the said John Winthrop and John Mason, or one of them, to whome WEE DOE hereby give full power and authority to Administer the same

accordingly. And our further will and pleasure, is that all and every Governour or Deputy Governour to bee Elected and Chosen by vertue of theis presents, shall take the said Oath before two or more of the Assistants of the said Company for the tyme being, vnto whom wee doe, by theis presents, give full power and authority to give and Administer the said Oath accordingly. And the said Assistants and every of them, and all and every other Officer or Officers to bee hereafter Chosen from tyme to tyme, to take the said Oath before the Governour or Deputy Governour for the tyme being, vnto which said Governour or Deputy Governour wee doe, by theis presents, give full power and authority to Administer the same accordingly.

AND FURTHER, of our more ample grace, certeine knowledge and meere mocon WEE HAVE given and Graunted, and by theis presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, ULME give and Graunt vnto the said Governour and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America, and to every Inhabitant there, and to every Person and Persons Trading thither, And to every such Person and Persons as are or shall bee free of the said Collony, full power and authority from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter, to take, Ship, Transport and Carry away, for and towards the Plantacon and defence of the said Collony such of our loveing Subjects and Strangers as shall or will willingly accompany them in and to their said Collony and Plantacon: (Except such Person and Persons as are or shall bee therein restrayned by vs, our heires and Successors:) And alsoe to Ship and Transport all and all manner of goods, Chattells, Merchandizes and other things whatsoever that are or shall be vsefull or necessary for the Inhabitants of the said Collony and may lawfully bee Transported thither; Neverthe lesse, not to bee discharged of payment to vs, our heires and Successors, of the Dutyes, Customes and Subsidies which are or ought to bee paid or payable for the same.

AND FURTHER, Our will and pleasure is, and WEE DOE for vs, our heires and Successors, Ordeyne, Declare and Graunt vnto the said Governour and Company and their Successors, That all and every the Subjects of vs, our heires or Successors which shall goe to Inhabite within the said Colony, and every of their Children which shall happen to bee borne there or on the Sea in goinge thither or returneing from thence, shall have and enjoye all liberties and immunities of free and naturall Subjects within any the Dominions of vs, our heires or Successors, to all intents, Construccions and purposes whatsoever, as if they and every of them were borne within the Realme of England,

AND WEE DOE authorize and impower the Governour, or in his absence the Deputy Governour for the tyme being, to appointe two or more of the said assistants att any of their Courts or Assemblies to bee held as aforesaid, to have power and authority to Administer the Oath of Supremacy and obedience to all and every Person and Persons which shall att any tyme or tymes hereafter goe or passe into the said Colony of Connecticut, vnto which said Assistants soe to bee appointed as aforesaid, WEE DOE, by these presents, give full power and authority to Administer the said Oath accordingly.

AND WEE DOE FURTHER, of our especiall grace, certeine knowledge and meere mocon, give and Graunt vnto the said Governour and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America, and their Successors, that itt shall and may bee lawful to and for the Governour or Deputy Governour and such of the Assistants of the said Company for the tyme being as shall bee Assembled in any of the Generall Courts aforesaid, or in any Courts to be especially Sumoned or Assembled for that purpose, or

the greater parte of them, whereof the Governour or Deputy Governour and Six of the Assistants, to be all wayes Seaven, to Erect and make such Judicatories for the heareing and Determining of all Accons, Causes, matters and things happening within the said Colony or Plantacon and which shall bee in dispute and depending there, as they shall thinke fitt and convenient; And alsoe from tyme to tyme to Make, Ordaine and Establish All manner of wholesome and reasonable Lawes, Statutes, Ordinances, Direccons and Instrucons, not contrary to the laws of this Realme of England, as well for setting the formes and Ceremonies of Government and Magestracy fitt and necessary for the said Plantacon and the Inhabitants there as for naming and Stileing all sorts of Officers, both superior and inferior, which they shall find needfull for the Government and Plantacon of the said Colony, and the distinguishing and setting forth of the severall Dutyes, Powers and Lymitts of every such Office and Place, and the formes of such Oaths, not being contrary to the Laws and Statutes of this our Realme of England, to bee administered for the Execucon of the said severall Offices and Places; As alsoe for the disposing and Ordering of the Eleccon of such of the said Officers as are to bee Annually Chosen, and of such others as shall succeed in case of death or removall, and Administering the said Oath to the new Elected Officers, and Graunting necessary Comissions, and for imposicon of lawfull Fines, Mulcts, Imprisonment or other Punishment vpon Offenders and Delinquents, according to the Course of other Corporacons within this our Kingdome of England, and the same Lawes, fines, Mulcts and Execucons to alter, change, revoke, adnull, release or Pardon, vnder their Comon Seale, As by the said Generall Assembly or the major part of them shall be thought fitt; And for the directing, ruleing and disposing of all other matters and things whereby our said people, Inhabitants there, may bee soe religiously, peaceably and civilly Governed as their good life and orderly Conversacon may wynn and invite the Natives of the Country to the knowledge and obedience of the onely true God and Saviour of mankind, and the Christian faith, which in our Royall intencons and the Adventurers free profession is the onely and principall end of this Plantacon; WILLING, Commanding and requireing, and by these presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, Ordaineing and appointeing. That all such Lawes, Statutes and Ordinances, Instrucons, Imposicons, and Direccons as shall bee soe made by the Governour, Deputy Governour, and Assistants, as aforesaid, and published in writeing vnder their Comon Seale, shall carefully and duely bee observed, kept, performed and putt in execucon, according to the true intent and meaning of the same.

AND these our letters Patents, or the Duplicate or Exemplification thereof, shall bee to all and every such Officers, Superiors and inferiors, from tyme to tyme, for the Putting of the same Orders, Lawes, Statutes, Ordinances, Instrucons and Direccons in due Execucon, against vs, our heires and Successors, a sufficient warrant and discharge.

AND WEE DOE FURTHER, for vs, our heires and Successors, give and Graunt vnto the said Governor and Company and their Successors, by these presents, That itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the chiefe Commanders, Governours and Officers of the said Company for the tyme being whoe shall bee resident in the parts of New England hereafter menconed, and others inhabiting there by their leave, admittance, appointment or direccon, from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter, for their speciall defence and safety, to Assemble, Martiall, Array, and putt in Warlike posture the Inhabitants of the said Colony, and to; Commissionate, Impower and authorize such Person or Persons as they shall thinke fitt to lead and Conduct the said Inhabitants, and to encounter, expulse, repell and resist by force of Armes,

as well by Sea as by land, And alsoe to kill, Slay and destroy, by all fitting wayes, enterprizes and meanes whatsoever, all and every such Person or Persons as shall at any tyme hereafter Attempt or enterprize the destruccon, Invasion, detriment or annoyance of the said Inhabitants or Plantacon, And to vse and exercise the law Martiall, in such Cases onely as occasion shall require, And to take or surprize by all wayes and meanes whatsoever, all and every such Person and Persons, with their Shipps, Armour, Ammunicon, and other goods of such as shall in such hostile manner invade or attempt the defeating of the said Plantacon or the hurt of the said Company and Inhabitants; and vpon just Causes to invade and destroy the Natives or other Enemyes of the said Colony.

NEVERTHELESSE, Our Will and pleasure is, AND WEE DOE hereby Declare vnto all Christian Kings, Princes and States, That if any Persons which shall hereafter Bee of the said Company or Plantacon, or any other, by appointment of the said Governor and Company for the tyme being, shall at any tyme or tymes hereafter Robb or Spoile by Sea or by land, and doe any hurt, violence or unlawful hostility to any of the Subjects of vs, our heires or Successors, or any of the Subjects of any Prince or State beinge then in league with vs, our heires or Successors, vpon Complaint of such injury done to any such Prince or State, or their Subjects WEE, our heires and Successors, will make open Proclamacon within any parts of our Realme of England fitt for that purpose, That the Person or Persons committinge any such Robbery or Spoile, shall within the tyme lymitted by such Proclamacon, make full restitucon or satisfaccon of all such injuries done or committed, Soe as the said Prince or others soe complayneing may bee fully satisfied and contented. And if the said Person or Persons whoe shall committ any such Robbery or Spoile shall not make satisfaccon accordingly, within such tyme soe to bee limited, That then itt shall and may bee lawful for vs, our heires and Successors, to put such Person or Persons out of our Allegiance and Proteccon: And that it shall and may bee lawfull and free for all Princes or others to Prosecute with hostility such Offenders and every of them, their and every of their Procurers, ayders, Abettors and Councillors in that behalfe. PULMVIDED, alsoe, and our expresse will and pleasure is, AND WEE DOE by these presents for vs, our heires and Successors, Ordeyne and appointe that these presents shall not in any manner hinder any of our loveing Subjects whatsoever to vse and exercise the Trade of Fishinge vpon the coast of New England in America, but they and every or any of them shall have full and free power and liberty to contynue and vse the said Trade of Fishing upon the said Coast, in any of the Seas therevnto adioyning, or any Armes of the Seas or Salt Water Rivers where they have byn accustomed to Fish, and to build and sett vpon the wast land belonging to the said Colony of Connecticutt, such Wharfes, Stages and workehouses as shall bee necessary for the Salting, dryeing and keeping of their Fish to bee taken or gotten vpon that Coast, any thinge in these presents conteyened to the contrary notwithstanding.

AND KNOWE YEE FURTHER, That Wee, of our more abundant grace, certaine knowledge and meere mocon HAVE given, Graunted and Confirmed, And by theis presents for vs, our heires and Successors, DOE give, Graunt and Confirme vnto the said Governor and Company and their Successors, AULM that parte of our Dominions in Newe England in America bounded on the East by Norrogancett River, commonly called Norrogancett Bay, where the said River falleth into the Sea, and on the North by the lyne of the Massachusetts Plantacon, and on the South by the Sea, and in longitude as the lyne of the Massachusetts Colony, runinge from East to West, (that is to say,) from the Said Norrogancett Bay on

the East to the South Sea on the West parte, with the Islands thervnto adioyneinge, Together with all firme lands, Soyles, Grounds, Havens, Ports, Rivers, Waters, Fishings, Mynes, Mynerals, Precious Stones, Quarries, and all and singular other Comodities, Jurisdiccons, Royalties, Priviledges, Franchises, Preheminenes, and hereditaments whatsoever within the said Tract, Bounds, lands and Islands aforesaid, or to them or any of them belonging.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same vnto the said Governor and Company, their Successors and Assignes, for ever vpon Trust and for the vse and benefitt of themselves and their Associates, freemen of the said Colony, their heires and Assignes, TO BEE HOLDEN of vs, our heires and Successors, as of our Mannor of East Greenwich, in Free and Common Soccage, and not in Capite nor by Knights Service, YULMLDING AND PAYINGE therefore to vs, our heires and Successors, onely the Fifth parte of all the Oare of Gold and Silver which from tyme to tyme and at all tymes hereafter shall bee there gotten, had or obteyned, in lieu of all Services, Dutyes and Demaunds whatsoever, to bee to vs, our heires or Successors, therefore or thereout rendered, made or paid.

AND LASTLY, Wee doe for vs, our heires, and Successors, Graunt to the said Governor and Company and their Successors, by these presents, that these our Letters Patent shall bee firme, good and effectuell in the lawe to all intents, Construccons and purposes whatsoever, accordinge to our true intent and meaneing herein before Declared, as shall be Construed, reputed and adiudged most favourable on the behalfe and for the best benefitt and behoofe of the said Governor and Company and their Successors, ALTHOUGH EXPRESSE MENCON of the true yearely value or certeinty of the premises, or of any of them, or of any other Guifts or Graunts by vs or by any of our Progenitors or Predecessors heretofore made to the said Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America aforesaid in theis presents is not made, or any Statute, Act, Ordinance, Provision, Proclamacon or Restriction heretofore had, made. Enacted, Ordeyned or Provided, or any other matter, Cause or thinge whatsoever to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

IN WITNES whereof, we have caused these our Letters to be made Patent; WITNES our Selfe, att Westminster, the three and Twentieth day of Aprill, in the Fowerteenth yeare of our Reigne.

By writt of Privy Seale