

## THE GREAT CHARTER OF CONFIRMATION GRANTED BY JAMES I - SEPTEMBER 1609

WHEREAS the Borough of Eremuth alias Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight is an ancient Borough and the Mayor and Burgesses have prescribed to have and use diverse liberties and privileges which they claim also under colour of Charters of Confirmation from several Kings and Queens of this realm, confirming an ancient Grant made to this Borough by Baldwin de Redvers, sometime Lord of the Isle, viz:

The CHARTER of CONFIRMATION under the Great Seal in the Eighth year of the reign of King Edward I ;

A like CHARTER granted in the Eighteenth of Henry VI;

Another CHARTER of the Sixth of Edward IV and

Another CHARTER of the Second of Elizabeth;

And WHEREAS the said Mayor and Burgesses and their predecessors have always paid to the King and his predecessors for the said privileges, immunities and liberties the Farm Fee of Twenty Shillings yearly;

And WHEREAS it appears by the records in the Remembrancer's Office in the Exchequer in the Second year of Richard the Second that the Town of Yarmouth was entirely burned by the Enemy and its inhabitants greatly impoverished;

And WHEREAS the said Town lies near a good harbour for Shipping and for that reason King Henry VIII caused a Castle to be built since which the Town is better inhabited than before and it is hoped it will be yet more filled with people for increasing the strength of the Island and guarding the said Castle if His Majesty would vouch safe to re-grant them their liberties and immunities;

That the said Mayor and Burgesses esteeming the CHARTERS before mentioned insufficient to authorise them in the using and enjoying the said liberties and immunities have petitioned the King to make, confirm and create them a Body Politic and Corporate with such Franchises as shall be thought by the King expedient:

That the King therefore be willing to settle the rules for the Government of the said Borough and People there, declares it a Free Borough;

And they shall be a Body Politic and Corporate by the name Mayor and Burgesses of Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight with Capacity to purchase etc. to grant etc. to plead or be impleaded and to have a Common Seal;

That there shall be Twelve Chief Burgesses to be the Common Council of the Borough;

That out of these one shall be chosen Mayor of the Borough;

That they shall have power to make Laws, Statutes and Orders for the government of the Borough and its Officers;

That the Burgesses of the said Borough shall continue for life excepting any of them be removed for reasonable cause. And on the death or removal of a Chief Burgess the Mayor and major part of the Burgesses then living shall elect another in his place who shall be sworn before the Mayor and major part of the Chief Burgesses;

That the Mayor and Steward of the Borough shall hold the Court of the said Borough;

That they shall hold a View of Frank-pledge of all inhabiting and resident in the said Borough and to redress abuses in the same:

The Mayor and Burgesses are empowered to elect and constitute a Steward, a Common Clerk and a Sergent and Mace to continue during the pleasure of the Mayor and Burgesses;

That the Mayor and Burgesses shall have all the fines, forfeitures and profits of the Court which they shall have power to levey by their own Officers by distress;

They have also a grant of Strays and the goods of Felons within the limits of the Borough;

A Market is granted to the town to be kept every Wednesday and a Fair to be held yearly, viz:

On St James's Day, the Eve before and the Day after, together with a Court of Pie Poudre etc. with all the profits and emoluments belonging to such Markets, Fairs and Courts:

A special Licence and Authority are given to the Mayor and Burgesses to purchase and hold them, and their successors forever, any Manor Lands etc. not holden to the King in capite or by Knight's Service not exceeding the value of Twenty Pounds per annum, the Statute of Mortmain notwithstanding;

And Licence is also given to any person etc. to grant and alien to the Mayor and Burgesses, under like restriction, all liberties, privileges, franchises and immunities which the Borough has held and enjoyed by reason or colour of grants by the King or any of His predecessors or by any other persons made heretofore and confirmed, saving and reserving out of this Grant the Castle of Yarmouth, its ditches, trenches and limits, wherein the Mayor and Burgesses have no power or authority to enter:

They are to pay a Farm Fee of Twenty Shillings yearly at the Feast of St Michael:

A Clause is added to indemnify them from all prosecutions for any liberties or franchises used, had or usurped by them before the date of this Charter and no Fine is to be paid to the Hanaper Office for it:

Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of September in the Seventh Year of James.