

# A foot is 11 inches long. Alice in Wonderland? No, in Jersey it's perfectly true

Advocate **Christopher Scholefield**, a partner at Viberts, sheds some light on the way in which local land is measured

**I**N September the Jersey Evening Post reported that a price record was expected to be set upon the sale of a Jersey property which included '18 acres' of land.

But, for most people, land areas are an abstraction. It is not easy to imagine what 18 acres might feel like. Furthermore, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an acre of Jersey land. France uses the hectare and England the acre but, in the Channel Islands, the vergée reigns supreme. Naturally the Jersey vergée and the Guernsey vergée are not the same size: ours are larger.

So what does a vergée look and feel like? Take a look at the picture accompanying this article. A square vergée is just a bit smaller than the lawn atop the Waterfront car park.

But for those who really wish to understand what is going on, further background information will be helpful.

Before you can address the measurement of area, you must agree a standard for the measurement of length, not least because areas to be measured are rarely conveniently square but often long and thin, triangular or even circular.

In Jersey, your point of departure is the Jersey inch or pouce de perche. There are 12 pouces de perche in the Jersey foot or pied de perche. So far so good but (and some will find this a surprise) because a Jersey inch is a little shorter than an imperial inch, a pied de perche is not the same as an imperial foot. Instead of being 12 inches imperial in length, it is only 11 inches long. To recap, the Jersey foot is 11 inches imperial in length.

The next unit after the pied de perche is the perche

itself, which is 24 Jersey feet long (or, of course, 22 imperial feet long).

As well as being a unit of linear measurement, the perche can also be a unit of area measurement equivalent to 24 Jersey feet by 24 Jersey feet, making 576 Jersey feet square or 484 imperial feet square. Finally, an area containing 40 square perches, which could range from a strip two perches wide by 20 perches long to a perfect square six perches eight feet by six perch eight feet, makes a vergée.

By way of example:

The main open part of the Royal Square is V1.13.15 (one vergée, 13 perches, 15 pieds).

The area inside the touch lines of the Springfield pitch is V3.23.8.

A standard tennis court for a singles match is V0.4.7 and for a doubles match is V0.5.17.

The FB Fields excluding the pavilion, running track and car parks are V23.34.6

By way of illustration, we have shown a square vergée outlined in red on a bird's-eye view of the Waterfront car park next to a square acre, outlined in green, and a square hectare, outlined in pink.

And if you need a conversion formula, an English acre is V2.10.0 (or two and a quarter vergées per acre) whereas a French hectare (being an area equivalent to 100m x 100m) is V5.22.8 (so over five and a half vergées per hectare).

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The lawn atop the Waterfront car park (in red) is slightly larger than a vergée



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