

Legal

Virginie Hopps-Delplace

heads up the French conveyancing division
at law firm Charles Russell LLP.
Call 020 7203 5313 or visit
www.charlesrussell.co.uk



France's two types of council tax

Q I have heard that French people pay two annual municipal taxes, the "*taxe d'habitation*" and "*taxe foncière*". What is the difference between the two taxes and if I buy a holiday home in Brittany would I have to pay both of them? Also, how much roughly are these taxes annually – do they vary much by region?
GREG PRICE, BY EMAIL

A Both the *taxe d'habitation* and *taxe foncière* are similar to UK council tax. The main difference between the two taxes is who pays it.

The *taxe d'habitation* is paid by the property occupier on 1st January each year for the benefit of the *commune*. This tax is paid by the occupier notwithstanding whether they own or rent the property. The tax is a contribution for the communal services provided to the residents by the *commune* such as street lighting, collection of waste etc. It is also payable by a non-resident for a holiday home.

The amount of the *taxe d'habitation* varies from one *commune* to the other. As an example, the Côte d'Azur is likely to be more expensive than Brittany. The amount is set by the local authorities themselves

(*cadastre*) and is assessed on the land records rental value (cadastral value). A TV licence fee is also recovered with, and in addition to, the *taxe d'habitation*. The amount of the fee is the same whether you own one or three TVs.

The *taxe foncière* is paid by the owner of the property whether or not they occupy it, and whether they are resident or not. Again, this tax is assessed on the land records rental value

of the building, the rates being determined by the local authorities themselves.

The *taxe foncière* is payable for the calendar year but bills are sent out in autumn.

