**Dartmoor Churchyard Trim Trails Encourage Visitors To Get Active In Prayer**

A group of churches on Dartmoor has installed “Trim Trail” prayer trails through its churchyards as a way of welcoming families and encouraging people to engage with prayer while also getting fit.

The idea for the trails at St Andrew’s Church in Ashburton, St Mary’s in Holne and St Peter’s Buckland-in-the-Moor came about during the January lockdown.

Heidi Lewis, the Mission and Families Development Worker, said “With another lockdown in full swing we wondered what we could offer the families within the Ashburton and Moorland Mission Community, and more importantly, how could we continue to ‘reach out’ and engage with new families, even though we couldn’t physically get together or invite them to any events.”

“We wanted to offer something physical that would encourage people out of the house despite the rain and the cold!”

Each Trim Trail consists of a series of signs, with titles like the ‘Funky Pigeon’, ‘Giant Steps’, and the ‘Sit n’ Chill’.

Each one has a suggested physical activity suitable for all abilities (for example hopping around the outside of the church or doing star jumps), a Bible verse, a reflection point and a QR code linked to a relevant song video.

Some of the children connected to the churches even made a video to show how the Trim Trails work.

Heidi said “The trails have proved very popular – families have loved them, as have some of our more active older members.

“When our Toddler group began to meet in-person again, some of the parents commented on what a blessing it had been to have ‘an activity on the doorstep’ when so much was closed.

“It meant they could pop out while the weather was good enough without having to get in the car.”

The churches have decided to leave the trails in place now the lockdown is over, in the hope that the warmer weather will encourage even more people to visit the churchyards and get active.